THE LOVE OF GOD

and the

CROSS OF JESUS

By

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VOLUME ONE

B. HERDER BOOK CO.

15 & 17 SOUTH BROADWAY, ST. LOUIS 2, MO.

AND

33 QUEEN SQUARE, LONDON, W. C.

1948

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B. HERDER BOOK CO.

Second Impression

Vail-Ballou Preus, Inc., Binghamton and New York

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INTRODUCTION

Great speculative theologians and great mystics have written so many excellent books on the love of God that we have only to get at the truth which they contain, for we can desire nothing better than to understand them well. But the works of the great masters of theological speculation, like St. Thomas, and those of the mystics strictly so-called, like St. John of the Cross, present serious differences, both in form and in point of view. We may, then, profit by comparing them, not to establish a harmony between them which would destroy both their difference and their individuality, but to see if, by reason of this very difference, these works do not mutually clarify one another. Such is the purpose of the present investigation.

In a preceding work, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* we saw that Christian perfection consists especially in charity, or the love of God and of neighbor. And we noted that the perfection of this virtue falls under the precept of love, not as matter, or that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all men ought to tend, each according to his condition. We said further that the gifts of the Holy Ghost, particularly the gifts of understanding and of wisdom, the principles of infused contemplation, are connected with charity and develop with it, so that infused contemplation belongs to the normal growth of holiness. St. John of the Cross has, in fact, shown that contemplation, which is

quite distinct from such extraordinary graces as visions, revelations, and interior words, begins to grow ordinarily at the outset of the illuminative way and comes to full flower in the unitive way. This first work was an exposition of the principles of ascetical and mystical theology; it might have been called "The Love of God and Contemplation."

In the present work, entitled *The Love of God and the Cross of Christ,* we are not taking up again the study of those problems already dealt with; we presuppose their solution as given in the light of the principles of St. Thomas and of St. John of the Cross. Here we shall confirm that solution by what the two great masters teach on the love of God and the mystery of the cross. Plainly, the subject touches what lies deepest in the interior life of our Lord Jesus Christ and consequently in the life of every Christian who would imitate Him. It is only by the royal road of the cross that the Christian soul truly enters into supernatural contemplation of the mysteries of faith and lives lovingly and deeply by them.

Division of the subject

In the first part of this work we treat in a general way of God's love for us, the response He expects from us, and the mystery of the cross. It contains a study of the problem of love, which comes to this: Is pure or disinterested love of God possible, and, if it is, what is its relation to love of self? In other words, does the primordial inclination of our nature lead us to love ourselves above everything else, or to love God still more? We shall study this problem in the light of St. Thomas' principles, which contain virtually the metaphysics and theology of love; we shall also see the relation of these principles to the mystery of the cross in our Lord and in His

mystical body. Then we shall discover what the progress of the love of God ought to be in a truly faithful Christian, a progress by means of mortification made necessary by the remains of original and personal sin, as well as by the infinite loftiness of our supernatural end.

We shall examine the laws of the progress of love or of the increase of charity, obtained by our meritorious acts and by Holy Communion. We shall see how, in principle, this progress ought, without haste, waste, or worry, to become ever more and more rapid.

Having done this, we shall be the better prepared to understand the crosses of the sensitive powers and of the spirit, the role of these purifying graces, and the way we should act during such trials. Finally we shall speak of the life of union, of its relation to the indwelling Blessed Trinity, together with the influence of the humanity of the Savior and of Mary our Mediatrix.

These pages are, then, a treatise on God's purifying graces, preceded by an introduction on His love for us and the return He expects from us. We have developed, especially under the title of "The Cross of the Senses" and "The Cross of the Spirit," the teaching of St. John of the Cross on the passive purifications of the senses and of the spirit, and of die states preceding and following them.

Although St. Thomas did not treat these purifications *ex professo,* he has given us, in the questions on grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost which accompany them, principles that make the description of the Doctor of Carmel more understandable by throwing light on diem from above, so to speak. These descriptions reproduce and enrich those already given by St. Gregory in his reflections on

the book of Job, and later those of Hugo of St. Victor and of Tauler.

Instead of "passive purification" we have chosen to use the more general and profound term, "the cross," in the sense our Lord Himself gave it in the gospel, so frequently explained by the Fathers and so beautifully chanted in the liturgy, especially during Passiontide. St. Thomas, in treating of this divine Passion, has left us some profound considerations on the love of God and the mystery of the cross. These considerations, united to his doctrine on charity, on living faith, and on the purifying role of the gifts of knowledge and understanding, help us to get a better grasp of the meaning and implication of the words of St. John of the Cross. These two great masters throw light on each other, the abstract considerations of St. Thomas showing us the profound essence of those things the great mystic of Carmel describes so concretely and vividly. Through this association the doctrine of the *Summa theologica* gains in life, throwing open vast perspectives before us, and the doctrine of *The Dark Night* reveals itself as much more theological than at first sight it seems to be. St. Thomas has made it his special task to lay bare the essence or nature of the infused virtues and of the gifts, reasoning to their properties and mutual relationships; and St. John of the Cross has described their progress to perfect development.

It is to our advantage to note at the start what each possesses unshared and what both hold in common.

The theology of St. Thomas and the spirituality of St. John of the Cross

Anyone frequently consulting the works of St. Thomas and meditating on those of St. John of the Cross can easily

see that fundamentally they agree. Although mystics often have a disdain for scholastic theology, St. John of the Cross, who knew it well, had great respect for it, and especially for the Angelic Doctor, whom he follows with particular care on questions relative to habitual and actual grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Some writers find a perfect harmony between their doctrines difficult. They say that St. Thomas, following Aristotle, has as his characteristic the mean and defends the value of everything human without in the least failing to recognize the infinite greatness of God. St. John of the Cross, they maintain, is the representative of excess, continually reminding us that no measure can exist for a love that should be measureless, placing the value of divine union in such strong relief that he seems to put too little value on things human.

If we forget the difference between scholastic terminology and the language of mysticism, we may come to suppose a wide doctrinal divergence between them; and this will widen if we understand St. Thomas' "mean" as a designation for the mediocre or the halfway, lying at an equal distance from philosophical and theological *minimum* and its opposite extreme.

We often find the fundamental theses of Thomism presented in this very way. In philosophy men assign them a place midway between Empiricism and idealistic Platonism, between materialism and exaggerated spiritualism; in theology, between Pelagianism and predestinationism; and in morals, between the laxist and rigorist, the liberal and authoritarian, points of view. A writer can easily slip into making such antitheses, frequently refuting the first of two extremes by the second and then the second by the first just to keep to

a vague middle course that oscillates first this way and then that, depending on tire moment's need. As a result, agnostics say that the antinomies are insoluble, and any thinking man could rightly label such a middle course eclecticism and, in die practical order, opportunism.

If this were St. Thomas' doctrine, it certainly would differ from the thought of St. John of the Cross: insisting on this is pointless. But does this idea belong to Thomism, or to the eclectics treading their aloof and careful way between those who exaggerate and those who minimize? It is dieir darling. St. Thomas' "mean" is a summit lifting its great shoulders high above the crooked course of error that splays out in *ever-lengthening* lines to far, flat extremes.

A truth is not on the same horizontal plane, on the same level, as die two contrary errors it opposes. It rises far above diem like a great peak radiant with principles. Eclecticism has never reached it, for eclecticism seeks, in its oscillations, to remain at an equal distance from the apex of this height and those errors which are like the two extremities of its base. Progress towards truth should not be a fluctuation between extremes, but an ascent, deviating neither to the right nor to the left, like the padi drawn by St. John of the Cross in the ascent of Mount Carmel.

If time permitted, we could easily show that this is die character of St. Thomas' progress toward the heights of truth and of the mean typical of his doctrine. The problems of becoming and of being, of knowledge, of the union of soul and body, of the relationship between intellect and will, and many others, could all be examined with this in mind; but, obviously, we would then be wandering too far afield from

the subject in hand, the spirituality of St. John of the Cross. This great mystic, Thomistically trained at Salamanca and consciously faithful to that training, has confined himself to treating of the soul's intimate relation with God, preparation for divine union in this life, and that union itself. To compare his doctrine with that of St. Thomas, we must, then, consider chiefly die terms of the divine union: God in His intimate life, the author of grace, and the human soul supernaturalized by grace, the infused virtues, and the gifts. Viewed in this light, the apparent distance separating these two conceptions contracts; more than that, St. John of the Cross brings out in a wonderful way the wealth of lofty truths expressed only virtually by St. Thomas and turns out before our eyes the hidden richness of his highest principles. The Angelic Doctor certainly does uphold the value of human things but always points to its infinite smallness when weighed against die infinite greatness of God. And St. John of the Cross, in all his works, never ceases praising God's infinite greatness by insisting on the purifications necessary to approach the inaccessible light of God and the conditions indispensable for divine union in this world. We do well, by the way, to remember diat even here and now divine union belongs to the normal development of the life of grace—by right if not, because of human weakness, in fact.

When it is a question of God, the first cause, probably no one holds that St. Thomas' thought lies halfway between the unlikely attenuations of the minimists and the exaltation of the great mystics. None have excelled the Angelic Doctor in dealing with the subject of God's sovereign dominion over all creation. Nor has anyone set forth the universality of the

divine causality and the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end better than he. According to him, divine causality, by reason of its intrinsic and transcendent efficacy, infallibly moves us not only to will the good in general but to choose a particular salutary good. And, far from injuring our liberty, it extends to the free mode of our determination.[1]

The Thomistic doctrine of grace is not only at an equal distance from Pelagianism and predestinationism as revived by Calvin, but it also rises above all such mediocre conceptions as the different forms of congruism. In one way or other, these put limitations on the universal causality of the First Agent and the sovereign efficacy of grace. They rob some or all of their meaning from St. Paul's words: "For who distinguisheth thee? Or what hast thou that thou hast not received?"[2] "For it is God who worketh in you, both to will and to accomplish, acording to His good will."[3]

On this fundamental point, St. John of the Cross, like the Carmelites of Salamanca, is the faithful disciple of St. Thomas. Few souls have actually lived the doctrine as deeply as he did. What the prince of theologians says speculatively about the intrinsic efficacy of grace, St. John of the Cross experienced, especially in the passive purification of the spirit, wherein men undergo temptations against the theological virtues such as God alone could vanquish by His grace. This He gives not only to precede our choice but to infallibly produce it in and with us. "Lord," says the saint, "if to grant what I ask You await my works, give them to me, accomplish them in me, and join to them the sufferings You will to accept from

1 See *Summa theol.,* la, q.19, a.4; a.8, ad aum; q.83, a.i, ad 311m; la Dae, q.io, a.4, c. et ad 311m.

2 I Cor. 4: 7.

* Phil. 2:13.

me." [4] This thought recurs often in the *Oracion de alma enamorada,* preserved in an autographed manuscript at Andujar.

The author of *The Dark, Night* and *The Living Flame* has grasped particularly well the consequences of the deep and often misunderstood distinction made by St. Augustine and St. Thomas between operating grace, by which the soul is moved without, properly speaking, moving itself, and cooperating grace, by which the soul both is moved and moves itself through its own proper activity.[5]

Like all the best Thomists,[6] St. John of the Cross has recognized that through operating grace, through tliat divine inspiration dominant in the passive state, man can act not only vitally but also freely and meritoriously without, properly speaking, acting deliberately, that is, as the result of discursive deliberation. Such is the act of the gift of piety inspired by the Holy Ghost. It is superior to the act of the virtue of religion under the guidance of Christian prudence. We can recite the Rosary but cannot have at will that filial lifting up of the heart that reaches to our Father in heaven. Of itself, by its own proper activity, the soul does not attain to acts of the gifts or purpose in advance to accomplish them. The Holy Ghost leads the soul to perform them without deliberation but with free consent to receive the divine inspiration. Like the most acute interpreters of St. Thomas, St. John of die Cross under-

[4] E. A. Peers, tr., *The Complete Works of St. John of the Cross* (London: Burns Oates & Washbournc, 1935), III, 243. See also pp. 244, 246. "The soul tliat is hard becomes harder through love of its own self. If in Thy love, O good Jesus, Thou softenest not the soul, it will persist for ever in its natural hardness. . . . Thou, Lord, returncst gladly and lovingly to exalt him that offends Thee, and I return not to exalt and honour him that angers me."

[5] la Ilae, q. rn, a.2.

[6] Cf. Del Prado, O.P., *De gratia et libero arbitrio,* II, 220, 223. This subject has already been treated in *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* tr. Doyle (St Louis: Herder, 1939), pp. 80 ff.

stood this and made it the principle of his mystical doctrine. He clearly distinguishes between the acts that the soul effects by its own activity under common and cooperating actual grace and those higher acts lying beyond the reach of the soul's capacity and in the power of God alone. Infused contemplation and the love flowing out from it are, for example, vital, free, and meritorious acts not only during times of grievous purification but even in ecstasy and rapture.

Living this doctrine deeply, St. John of the Cross admits without difficulty St. Thomas' teaching on the gratuitousness of our predestination to glory. We ought to remark this attentively that we may not misunderstand his statement that the call of interior souls to contemplation is a part of the normal way of sanctity. Of eternal life, the normal fulfillment of the life of grace, the Gospel says: "For many are called, but few are chosen." [7] The same is true of divine union, its normal prelude in this life, as St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas perfectly agree. We read in *The Spiritual Canticle:* "In the . . . day of eternity God predestined the soul to glory, and therein determined the glory which He would give her, and gave it to her freely, without beginning, before He created her. And this . . . is proper to this soul, in such wise that no happening or accident, high or low, will suffice to take it from her for ever; but she will come to possess without end that to which God predestined her without beginning." [8] We find the same thought again in *The Ascent of Mount Carmel:* "For, although it is true that a soul, according to its greater or smaller capacity, may have attained to union, yet not all do so in the same degree, for this depends upon what the Lord

7 Matt. 22:14.

8 *The Spiritual Canticle,* str. 38.

desires to grant to each one. It is in the same way that souls see God in heaven." [9]

This accord of St. John of the Cross with St. Thomas on the doctrines of grace and of predestination, certainly neither accidental nor material, is essential and formal, truly fundamental, reaching to the very spirit and orientation of their doctrines. No less agreement exists between them on another subject that concerns God Himself: the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end. The sentimentalism of the Modernists, through conforming to the method and doctrine of immanence, shows an unmistakable tendency to confound the order of grace with the order of nature, our higher with our merely sensitive faculties. This confusion leads a man to deny the necessity of mortification and the cross. Following St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross, on the contrary, states in the strongest terms that the order of nature is infinitely below the order of grace and declares the latter absolutely inaccessible to the natural powers of man or angel, no matter how fully those powers are developed. Because he believes so firmly in the infinite transcendence of the supernatural order, he insists, more than anyone else has ever done, on the necessity of the passive purification of the spirit to free the acts of the theological virtues from every natural alloy. Because together with St. Thomas and contrary to nominalist empiricists he is fully convinced of the absolute superiority of our intellect enlightened by faith and of our will animated by charity over our imagination and sensitive appetite, he insists on the necessity of the passive purification of the senses. These three orders, infinitely distant from one another, are so constituted—not in virtue of a free decree of God, as Duns Scotus would have it,

[9] *The Ascent of Mt. Carmel,* Bk. II, chap. 4.

but by their very nature, because of the very nature of God and of His intimate life, inaccessible to the natural powers of every created intellect, actual and possible alike.

Like St. Thomas, St. John of the Cross keeps repeating that imagination and emotion could be developed to infinity within their own order without ever attaining to the lowest degree of intellectual or moral life, just as the intellectual and volitional powers natural to men and angels too, could continue growing steadily and constantly without becoming worth the least degree of that grace, infused faith, and charity to be found in a baptized infant. St. Thomas says: "The good of grace in one is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe."[10] These primordial truths so clearly stated by St. Thomas have been misunderstood by the nominalist theologians and their successors and more recently by the Modernists, even when writing about "the dark night." No one, perhaps, has had a deeper insight into the practical consequences of these truths on the supernatural life than St. John of the Cross. The same cannot be said of Baruzi, whose recent work testifies to his bondage to the principles of idealistic immanentism.

Besides, so convinced is the author of *The DarJ^ Night of the Soul* that these great truths cannot find sufficient expression in our human language, that to make us understand them better he often has recourse to mystical hyperbole. His terminology thus differs from that of St. Thomas and the Scholastics. Difference of expression is, however, anything but doctrinal divergence. Indeed St. John of the Cross, intending to make us fully understand their value and to win us from our habit of bringing all things, even the most spirit-

[10] Ia Hae, q. X13, a. 9, ad aum.

ual, down to the level of the material, accentuates precisely those things in theology which are the very soul of the doctrinal body.

Readers not familiar with his style believe that he, unlike the moderate St. Thomas, exaggerates the necessity of austerity and purification. They forget that St. Thomas himself recognized the legitimate use of mystical hyperbole as a means of expression and that, moreover, spiritual writers who use it have Holy Scripture as their model.[11] An expression like "the nothingness of creatures" helps us to realize how trifling is the most gifted creature in comparison to God. The style of the mystic is a telling style, an apt instrument wisely used for a definite purpose. Our Lord Himself said, "If thy eye scandalize thee, pluck it out . . . thy hand, . . . cut it off. . . ."[12] The spiritual or mystical style is not the scholastic style. It would be an error, for example, to maintain as scholastically true those propositions about the nothingness of creatures, true only in mystical language, where we expect and properly interpret the use of hyperbole. Were we to take "the nothingness of creatures" literally, we would be granting that, strictly speaking, creatures are absolutely nothing and God alone exists, a position that entails the denial either of the dogma of creation or a fusion and confusion of the being of creatures with the being of God, the error of pantheists and immanentists. Logically there follows the denial of created free will and consequently of sin. If some mystics have gone off in this direction, if Master Eckhart's thought approaches or approximates this dangerous position, nothing is more contrary to the doctrine of St. John of the Cross. He repeatedly

[11] Cf. St. Thomas, *In Isaiam*, 5, 13.
[12] Matt. 18: 8 f.

insists upon the infinite distance between the created and the Uncreated, the existence of sin, and the necessity of profound purification for the soul. St. Thomas expresses this distance by saying that God alone is self-subsisting Being, "I am who am." In Him alone are essence and existence identical; in every creature they are really distinct.[13] In these entirely speculative domains, perfect harmony exists between St. John of the Cross and St. Thomas; this is true in equal measure in the practical order, as we are about to see.

A close study of the Angelic Doctor's answers to the two most important questions in the spiritual life reveals no doctrinal disagreement between St. John of the Cross and himself. These questions are: (i) Do the virtues consist in an exact mean? (2) How should the virtues grow? Let us see if, in this connection, the enthusiasm of St. John of the Cross is opposed to the perfect mean of St. Thomas Aquinas.

If St. Thomas says that the moral virtues, either acquired or infused, consist in an exact mean between too much and too little and generally between two contrary vices, this is certainly not the golden mean of die Epicureans. They avoid vice to escape its inconvenient consequences and not out of love for the true good transcending the useful and delectable alike. The moral mean, as St. Thomas conceived it, is a summit as well, the culminating point of the life of reason. It is above the opposing forms of the irrational and the evil.[14] The more virtue grows, the higher this exact mean becomes, without deviating either to the right or to the left. Fortitude, for example, remains at an equal distance from cowardice and from rashness, but at the same time it is ever reaching new

18Summa, la, q.3, a.3, 4; q.7, a.2, ad mm. Cf. also *De potentia,* q.3, a.i, ad 1711m.

14 Summa, la Hae, q.64, a.i, c. el ad rum.

heights. Infused fortitude is a higher mean than acquired fortitude; the gift of fortitude is higher still.[15] Likewise St. Thomas admits, without any difficulty, that the different phases of the soul's ascent to God are marked by the progress of the Christian moral virtues, especially with the help of the gifts. This is what he tells us when speaking of the perfecting virtues and the virtues of the perfect soul, those clear likenesses of the divine virtues, the supreme exemplars of our own. What St. Thomas merely indicates on this subject in one article,[16] St. John of the Cross develops throughout *The Ascent of Mount Carmel* and *The Dark, Night* in regard to the theological virtues and the gifts accompanying them. The harmony of these two doctrines is particularly apparent. St. Thomas teaches that, because these virtues immediately concern our last end, God Himself, they cannot consist essentially in an exact mean and that consequently they far surpass even the noblest moral virtues. God Himself in His infinite truth and goodness is the primary object and formal motive of faith, hope, and charity. Therefore we cannot believe too much in Him, hope too much in Him, or love Him too much. It is true that, as far as we are concerned and in an entirely accidental way, by relation to some material and secondary object, faith is to be found between unbelief and credulity. In the same way, hope has a middle position between despair and presumption. But deviations from the theological virtues do not originate in any limitation in their primary object or formal motive, as though development of

15 St. Thomas' doctrine about the mean of certain moral virtues, such as humility and magnanimity, religion and penance, is closely related to the teaching of the great mystics. Cf. IIa IIae, q.81, a.6, ad 311m; q.93, a.2; q. 129, a.3, ad turn and ad 4um; q.161, a.1, a.3; IIIa, q.85, a.2, a.3.

16 Ia IIae, q.61, a. 5.

these virtues reached boundaries beyond which it cannot pass without falling into excess. Departures from the virtues originate in a bad application of their motive to some secondary matter that is unfitting; for example, we can hold as revealed what is not revealed or we can hope for the grace of a happy death and yet have no will to realize its necessary condition, a good life.

So not only is it true that we cannot believe in God too much, hope in Him too much, or love Him too much, but it is also true that we cannot believe in Him, or hope in Him, or love Him enough.[17] Hence we are not only counseled but required to grow in virtue until death. In this matter the exact mean no longer characterizes St. Thomas' doctrine; at these great heights he says with all the great mystics that the measure of our love of God is to have no measure. "Now the love of God and of our neighbor is not commanded according to a measure, so that what is in excess of the measure be a matter of counsel. This is evident from the very form of the commandment, pointing, as it does, to perfection, for instance, in the words, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart.' . . . The reason of this is that the end of the commandment is charity . . . and the end is not subject to a measure but only such things as are directed to the end, as the Philosopher observes."[18] The perfection of charity falls under the first and greatest commandment not as matter, as that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all Christians should advance, each according to his condition. Here, as St. Thomas says, the objective measure of our acts is no longer created but uncreated and, there-

17 *Ibid.*, q.64, a.4.
18 IIa IIae, q.184, a.3.

fore, infinite and impassable.[10] In every one of his works, St. John of the Cross repeats the same thing.

The essentially supernatural and naturally inaccessible character of the uncreated formal motive of the three theological virtues should receive particular attention because of its importance. Once we have appreciated this, then the more we read *The Dark, Night of the Soul* and *The Living Flame* and compare them with St. Thomas' treatises on the theological virtues and the gifts accompanying them, the more we see how these two dissimilar works mutually clarify each other. St. Thomas shows us the nature and properties of the infused virtues and of the gifts; St. John of the Cross holds up before us the wonder of their growth and strengthening—the loveliest thing in the world. This takes place in the midst of those passive purifications which bring into strong relief the wholly supernatural, formal motive of the theological virtues: God, the first revealing truth, God all-powerful, ever merciful and ready to help, God infinitely good in Himself. Nowhere is the full development of the theological virtues and of the gifts of wisdom and understanding better presented than in the works of this great saint. In his treatment of these lofty and difficult subjects lies his claim to that greatness the Church recognizes in conferring upon him the title of Doctor.

To appreciate fully the penetration of these two great masters, we must consider that for them—contrary to Scotus, the nominalist theologians, and their numerous followers—the infused Christian virtues and especially the theological virtues are supernatural not only *quoad modum,* by the mode of their production, like the resurrection of the dead, when

19 Ia IIae, q.64, a.4, ad 2um; "The theological virtues perfect (our intellect and will) in relation to an uncreated rule and measure."

natural life is supernaturally restored to the body; but they are supernatural *quoad substantiam,* by their very essence, like sanctifying grace, the physical and formal participation in the nature of God. These virtues have their source in sanctifying grace as its properties, and are specified by an essentially supernatural formal object and motive, inaccessible to the natural competence of any human or angelic intellect, however powerful. "In the object of faith," St. Thomas says, "there is something formal, as it were, namely, the First Truth surpassing all the natural knowledge of a creature, and something material, namely, the thing to which we assent while adhering to the First Truth. With regard to the former, before obtaining the happiness to come, faith is common to all (whether men or angels) who have knowledge of God, by adhering to the First Truth." [20] "A heretic does not hold the other articles of faith, about which he does not err, in the same way as one of the faithful does, namely, by adhering simply to the Divine Truth, because, in order to do so, a man needs the help of the habit of faith." [21] This faith, essentially supernatural by reason of the formal motive and the primary object specifying it, is altogether different from the acquired faith of the demons who, forced by the evidence of miracles, believe while trembling: "compelled by the evidence of signs. Whence 'believing' is used equivocally of the faithful and of demons; in them faith is not due to any infused light of grace, as it is in the faithful." [22]

Without the infused light of faith, man, when face to face

20 IIa IIae, q.5, a.x.

21 *Ibid.,* a.3, ad 111m.

22 *De veritate,* q. 14 a. 9, ad 411m. The question of the essentially supernatural character of infused faith has already been treated at length in *De revelatione,* I, 458-515.

with the gospel, is like a tone-deaf listener at a symphony; he hears it but cannot perceive its beauty. As St. Paul says: "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him; and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined." [23] Faith is "the gift of God," [24] "the substance of things to be hoped for," [28] the seed of eternal life.

Very few souls have understood this statement of St. Paul as fully as the author of *The Dark, Night.* For a real comprehension of his splendid commentary on it, let us recall that the historical and critical study of the gospel and the philosophical examination of the miracles confirming it can give us evidence of die credibility of the mysteries of faith. They can bring us to a rational certitude that God, the author of a naturally knowable miracle, is also the author of the gospel. This rational certitude, however, does not have the same formal motive as infused faith, for it rests on the first principles of natural reason and not on the revealed and revealing First Truth.

In itself, the First Truth is the cause of faith, being that which and that by which we believe,[20] making us adhere by the infused light of faith to the mysteries of faith revealed to us. By God I believe in God, my single "Credo" acknowledging Him who reveals and is revealed in one and the same essentially supernatural act.[27]

This is a new domain, the kingdom of God, infinitely beyond the natural knowledge of every actual or even possible

23 I Cor. 2: 14. See St. Thomas' commentary on this text.
24 Eph. 2:8.
26 Heb. it: I.
23 Cajetan, in Ham Hac, q.I, a. I, xi.
27 Ha Hae, q.2, a. 2.

creature. In this realm, by an act of obscure but wholly supernatural faith, man infallibly clings to God. In a divine obscurity far above the reach of human reasoning, the created intellect finds refuge in the immutable.

When the act of faith, infinitely superior to the natural activity of both our reason and the angelic intellect, is illumined by the gifts of understanding and wisdom, we shall have infused contemplation of the revealed mysteries and the understanding and delight of a spirit of great faith.[28] Infused contemplation proceeds from faith and the enlightening gifts, as both die Carmelite Joseph of the Holy Ghost and Cajetan have brought out so well.[29]

Certain theologians who forget this great teaching and follow the nominalists come to consider our act of faith as a kind of discursive and substantially natural act invested with a supernatural modality. They think that it rests formally on the natural evidence of miracles and the other signs that confirm revelation and therefore they regard it as substantially natural although invested with a supernatural modality and efficacious for salvation. The supernatural would not be, according to this view, a new and essentially divine life, but a sort of finish, a pretty process of supernatural gold plating, as it were. If this is said of the act of faith, it must logically be asserted of the acts of hope and of charity as well. Then charity would no longer be the same on earth as it is in heaven, since in heaven alone would it be essentially supernatural. This sort of supernatural is but an imitation diamond. We seek the genuine.

28 Ibid., q. 8, a. 45.

29 Joseph of the Holy Ghost, *Cursus theol. scolast. mysticae,* II, dise 13, p. 395. See also Father Gardeil's recent and excellent work, *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique,* II, 173 fi.

What nominalist theologians and their followers failed to see, St. John of the Cross, walking in the way of St. Thomas, has comprehended in a masterly way. The doctrine that there are acts essentially supernatural because of their formal motive and inaccessible to both the human and the angelic intellects serves as the basis for all he has written on faith, hope, and charity. Few others have possessed the same insight into the meaning and implication of our Lord's words: "No man can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him. . . . Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." [30] "My sheep hear My voice."[31] "The school in which God teaches and is heard," says St. Augustine, "is far from the realm of the senses. We see many men come to the Son of God, since we see many who believe in Christ; but when and how they have learned this truth of the Father we do not see; too intimate and too secret is this grace." [32] "He who has supernatural faith," says St. Thomas, "cleaves through the influence of an infused light, to the First Truth revealing." [33]

St. John of the Cross always keeps before us the increasing intensity of this infused light. He says: "From what has been said it is to be inferred that, in order for the understanding to be prepared for this Divine union, it must be pure and void of all that pertains to sense, and detached and freed from all that can be clearly perceived by the understanding profoundly hushed and put to silence, and leaning upon faith, which alone is the proximate and proportionate means whereby the soul is united with God; for such is the likeness between itself

80 John 6: 44, 47.
81 John 10: 27.
32 De praedestinatione sanctorum, P.L., XLIV, 970; XLIII, 1019.
88 St. Thomas *in Joann.,* c. IV, lect. V, 2.

and God that there is no difference, save that which exists between seeing God and believing in Him. . . . And thus, by this means alone, God manifests Himself to the soul in Divine light, which surpasses all understanding. And therefore, the greater is the faith of the soul, the more completely is it united with God . . . beneath this darkness [of faith] the understanding is united with God, and beneath it God is hidden." [34]

This evidendy means that the primary object and the formal motive of infused faith infinitely surpass the natural powers of every created intellect. But in his immortal pages on the passive purifications of the spirit St. John of the Cross revealed to best advantage one of the highest consequences of this doctrine. St. Thomas had already given the principles and traced the course to be followed when he showed tliat the gift of understanding progressively purifies faith from every human alloy by freeing our mind from speculative and practical errors and from attachment to sensible images.[35] St. John of the Cross showed us how, in the night of the spirit under the two contrary influences of God and Satan and through purifying, redeeming, and almost overwhelming suffering, the three formal motives of the theological virtues grow brighter and brighter in spite of the darkness. In all their uncreated and supernatural sublimity these are like three great spiritual diamonds—God the revealing First Trudi, God able and willing to help us, God infinitely good and eminently lovable. St. Thomas had declared that these three formal motives are inaccessible to the natural intellectual powers of any actual or possible creature. St. John of the Cross made known

[34] *The Ascent of Mt. Carmel,* Bk. II, chap. 8.

[35] IIa IIae, q.8, a.7-

to us how the Holy Ghost, by purging the theological virtues of every natural impurity through the light of His gifts, gives them the capacity to cleave with great purity to God and to His intimate life, unattainable by the natural knowledge of even the greatest angel.

Such is the immediate preparation for transforming union: wherein, in this life, the soul is divinized by being made to share in the very nature of God; wherein it enjoys, through the gift of wisdom, the quasi-experimental and almost continual realization of the indwelling Trinity; and wherein it loves with a pure and generous love the infinitely good God and, in Him, the souls of men. In this state God touches the soul deeply, substantially. The Holy Spirit breathes His most secret inspirations into its depths. This is the supreme, the normal, development of the life of grace, eternal life begun in time. "Amen, amen, I say unto you: he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." [38]

The doctrine of St. John of the Cross is, then, in full harmony with the principles formulated by Thomas Aquinas and unfolds all their rich virtuality in the order of the mystical life. It has the great merit of joining to the theology of the theological virtues and the gifts the mystical states that St. Teresa contented herself with describing. It gives a scientific knowledge of these states by designating their four causes—their immediate subject, their formal constituent, their principle, and their end. It has another merit no less great. It draws a clear-cut distinction between infused contemplation (which proceeds from faith united to charity and from the gifts of wisdom and understanding) and those extraordinary favors tliat sometimes accompany it (visions, revelations, in-

36 John 6: 47. Cf. *The Living Flame,* str. 2, v. 5.

terior words). And it shows that the first alone belongs to the normal way of sanctity and is greatly to be desired. St. John of the Cross is one of the masters who do most to warn souls against the desire for extraordinary favors while, at the same time, making them desire more and more the full perfection of charity, together with infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith, which usually accompanies it. He even insists that the desire for revelations turns the soul from true contemplation, from the divine darkness of faith.[37] In this he again faithfully follows St. Thomas, who has taught us that the grace of the virtues and the gifts is far superior to the gratuitous graces *{gratis datae}* which are, in a sense, external, like the gift of miracles or of tongues, or the prophetic knowledge of future events.[38]

St. John of the Cross has merited the title of Doctor of the Church because of the absolute trustworthiness and the great sublimity of his doctrine. Many things in mystical doctrine and in the works of his great predecessors become clear to us when we read him. He floods new light upon every subject. With him speculative mystical theology becomes a definitive science; and, instead of separating itself from general theology, is incorporated within it, becoming its highest and most beautiful branch.

So, in perfect fidelity to tradition, the work of St. John of the Cross marks a great step forward in doctrinal mystical theology. He has, indeed, what is very unusual, the double authority of a sure theologian and a great mystic who has had deep and experimental knowledge of the divine things about which he speaks. For this reason he is far ahead of most

[37] *The Ascent of Nit. Carmel,* Bk. II, chap. 27.
[38] la Ilae, q. in, a.5.

authors who have written on the same subject. He speaks of these things as only the great masters can. In his writings we are aware of the continual influence of the gifts of wisdom and understanding. His words flow freely from their source, the Holy Ghost, "a fountain of water, springing up into life everlasting." [39]

When we have meditated on this doctrine and have observed at close range souls that, during the trials of the night of the spirit, live, and live deeply, by it, we return with new joy to St. Thomas' treatises on grace, the theological virtues, and the gifts. And we realize that the best commentators have not told us all they contain. We discover new treasures in them. We see that the principles which the Angel of the Schools formulated on faith, hope, and charity are fully verified only in the mystical life. And we are convinced that doctrinal mysticism is nothing else but the full flowering of speculative theology, just as experimental mysticism is the normal and full development of the grace of the virtues and of the gifts in a truly faithful, interior soul.

May these two great masters obtain for us light to understand them well and fidelity to follow them closely.

[89] John 4:14.

PART I

God's Love for Us, Our Return of Love, and the Mystery of the Cross

In this first part we shall consider God's love for us as the ultimate foundation of the love we ought to have for Him. We shall consider the problem of the relationship between our love of God and our love of self and St. Thomas' solution of the problem. Then we shall study the bearing of the love of God upon two mysteries, namely, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity in our souls, and the Cross.

CHAPTER I

God's Love for Us; Our Return of Love

Let us therefore love God: because
God first hath loved us. I John 4:19

Man naturally desires to be happy, and true wisdom consists in seeking, not apparent, but real happiness, to be found not in tire fleeting but in the immutable, in possessing and loving the infinite Good, who alone can satisfy the deepest longing of our hearts.

The basis for the Great Commandment

The First Commandment of God accords with these longings. Besides being the principle and end of all the other commandments, it is the end of the evangelical counsels as well. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." [1] St. Paul calls the love of God and neighbor "the bond of perfection" [2] because it unites our souls to God, our last end, and tends to make all our powers center in Him. Divine charity has sovereignty over all the other virtues, informing, animating, and ordering them toward their last end.[3] All the exploits of the other virtues are attributed to it, the general of the army

1 Luke xo: 27.
2 Col. 3:14.
3 *Summa,* IIa Hae, q.23, a. 8.

of virtues, the principle of merit. So true is this that without charity we are, according to St. Paul,[4] personally nothing, even though we might have, for the good of our neighbor, the gifts of prophecy and of miracles and tire knowledge of the angels. We,are personally nothing in the order of salvation, because without charity our soul is in a state of death, devoid of merit, and our will is turned aside from the divine will, directed away from God, our last end. On the other hand, true charity suffices, in a sense, for everything, because it necessarily presupposes the faith and hope it vivifies and because it implies all the infused moral virtues subordinated to it and animated by it.[5] In this sense St. Augustine could say: "Love and do what you will"—provided you love in truth. In the same vein St. Paul has written: "Charity is patient, is kind ; charity envieth not, dealeth not perversely, is not puffed up, is not ambitious, seeketh not her own, is not provoked to anger, thinketh no evil; rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth with the truth; beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things. Charity never falleth away: whether prophecies shall be made void or tongues shall cease. . . . And now there remain faith, hope, and charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity." [8]

From this revealed doctrine, St. Augustine and St. Thomas have concluded that Christian perfection in this life consists neidter in knowledge of God nor in wisdom, so highly extolled by philosophers, nor yet in fortitude, so much admired by the heroes of paganism, nor in the external austerities and solitary life of the anchorites, nor in the acts of divine worship and of religion. For St. Augustine and St. Thomas, Christian

4 I Cor. 13:1.
8 IIa Ilae, q.23, a.6, 7, 8.
8 I Cor. 13: 4-13.

perfection consists essentially and particularly in the increasingly faithful observance of the two commandments of the love of God and of neighbor, secondarily and instrumentally in the evangelical counsels, since these are ordered to the destruction of whatever hinders the perfect exercise of charity.[7] They add that the first and greatest commandment has no limits and that the perfection of charity falls under the precept not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized but as the end toward which all men, each according to his condition, ought to tend.[8]

Such,js the first and greatest commandment. What is its basis? We find the answer in the words of St. John: "Xxt^us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us."[9] For our deeper understanding of charity, let right reason first tell us what love is due to God in the purely natural order. Then supernatural revelation will teach us what it alone can: the intimate nature of the supernatural love we owe to God. In this way we shall see more clearly the basis for the first and greatest commandment.

Reason and the love of God

Free from error, reason alone suffices to tell us that our hearts, made as they are to love the good, ought to love the Sovereign Good, the principle of all others, before and above them all. Not without purpose did God grant to us the intelligence He denied to animals. Fashioned to know the truth, our intellect finds complete repose only in the knowledge of the supreme truth upon which all others depend. Since

7 *Summa,* Ha Ilae, q. 184, a. 3.

8 *Ibid.,* ad 2um and ad 311m. See also St. Augustine, *De. perfectione justitiae, c.* viii.

0 I John 4: 19.

it knows the good, it knows not only the sensible, delectable good possessed by animal and libertine alike, not only the useful good sought after by the man of affairs as a means to an end, but the true good that has its perfection within itself, independently of the pleasure or advantages derived from it. Justice in every form is such a good, as is truthfulness as opposed to falsehood, courage and patience too, in fact, the whole harmony of the virtues that make a man a good man. Our intellect, having an idea of the true good, conceives it without limitations. Above and beyond justice mixed with imperfection, we conceive of justice without a shadow, a limit, or a restriction. Transcending every particular, our thoughts reach pure Good, Supreme Good, which, by its essence, is identical with Beauty, that Beauty spoken of by Plato in *The Banquet* as "everlasting, not growing and decaying, or waxing and waning . . . not fair in one point of view and foul in another, or at one time or in one relation or one place fair, at another time or in another relation of at another place foul, as if fair to some and foul to others . . . or existing in any other being, as, for example, in an animal or in heaven or in earth or in any other place; but beauty absolute, separate, simple, and everlasting, which without any diminution and widiout increase, or any change, is imparted to the ever-growing and perishing beauties of all other things." [10]

Our intellect, seeing itself superior to blind matter, realizes that it could not have come from matter. Is there any greater absurdity than to maintain that the intellect of a St. Augustine could be produced by blind material fatality, that life could spring up from absence of life, that order and the principle of order could rise out of lack of order? The greater does not

[10] *Symposium,* an, ed. Jowett (New York: Random House, 1937), pp. 334 f.

come from the less. Furthermore, our intellect, seeing its own dependence and the dependence of all other intellects on the true, realizes that it owes its existence to a higher Intellect identified with the Truth itself always known. Likewise our will, which seeks the good, owes its existence to a higher Will identified with the Sovereign Good always loved. And the Sovereign Good cannot be distinct from the Supreme Truth and from Being itself—self-defined for Moses as "I am who am."

When our intellect has a notion, however imperfect, of limitless goodness and beauty, the will, following the intellect, desires that good. Made to love and desire the good, die will Ought to love first and most the Sovereign Good, the principle of all others.[11] Nothing could be more obvious. St. Thomas goes so far as to say that in our will there is a natural tendency to love God, the author of our nature, more than ourselves. The reason given by the holy doctor for this is profound, taken from the very nature of things.

> Now in natural things everything which, as such, is dependent upon and naturally belongs to another,[12] is principally and more strongly inclined to that other to which it belongs than toward itself. . . . For we observe that the part naturally exposes itself in order to safeguard the whole; as, for instance, the hand is without deliberation exposed to the blow for the whole body's safety. And since reason copies nature, we find the same inclination among the social virtues; for it behooves the virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the public weal of the state; and if

11 Summa, Ia IIae, q.2, a.7, 8; a.4, 8.

12 The words "its entire being" mean its conservation as well as its first production in being. A son depends on his father for his generation but he can keep on living after his father dies. The relationship of creatures to God is entirely different. They depend on Him for their very existence; if He did not will to conserve them in being, they would be annihilated. Cf. Ia, q. 104, a. I.

man were a natural part of the city, then such inclination would be natural to him and not acquired. Consequently, since God is the universal good,[13] and under this good both man and angel and all creatures are comprised (because every creature in regard to its entire being naturally belongs to God, its creative and conserving first cause), it follows that from natural love angel and man alike love God before themselves and with a greater love. Otherwise, if either of them loved self more than God, it would follow that natural love [given by the Author of nature] would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected but destroyed by charity.[14]

We shall take up this point at some length in the next chapter in order to determine the true relationship between love of God and legitimate love of self. For the moment, it is enough to ask: Since the Sovereign Good is the principle of every other good, is it not infinitely better and more worthy of love than we are?

Our natural inclination to love God above all things is no doubt weakened by the effects of original and personal sin.[15] Moreover, as we actually find ourselves, it does not bring us to love God, the author of our nature, efficaciously by observing the whole natural law.[16] Nevertheless it does subsist in the very core of our will, for it is identified with the will's very nature. And it exists in the damned and contributes much to their suffering. In them there is a grievous quasi-contradiction between their natural inclination still leading

18 What is meant here is universal good *in essendo et in causando, non in praedicando,* that is, goodness in its very essence and not goodness as attributable to all good things.

14 la, q.6o, a.5; Ila Ilae, q.109, a.3.

15 la Ilae, q.85, a.I.

^*Ibid.,* q.109, a.3. *Gratia sanans* is the same as *gratia elevans,* being habitual or sanctifying grace.

(hem to love existence and life and God, the author of life, and the pride, disobedience, and hate that persist in turning them from God.

Thus right reason shows us that only the Sovereign Good can really allay our natural thirst for happiness and satisfy our heart's deepest yearnings. This fact is a proof of the existence of God; since, if He did not exist, these natural inclinations would be absurd.[17] The two greatest philosophers of antiquity, Plato and Aristotle, put this truth into words when they placed beatitude in the natural knowledge of God and in a certain natural love of the Sovereign Good.

What right reason can establish is daily confirmed by experience. Whenever we think we have found happiness in some created good—some situation, the knowledge of some science, an intimate and fine friendship—it is not long before we discover that what we have is still only a finite good, incapable of fully satisfying a mind with a capacity to know and desire infinite good. The profound boredom so often experienced by worldlings, whose pleasure-seeking footsteps are everywhere dogged by it, testifies that their hearts are made for a good infinitely greater than die joys they pursue. Their continual need for change and the disillusionment that drives them from one creature to another make it evident that only God can fill the infinite void within their hearts. Our will, made to love the good in general and the Sovereign Good most of all, has depths that are, in a sense, infinite. Finite goods can do no more dian move its surface. It is free to respond to their attraction or not.[18] Only God, seen face to face, can exercise an attraction upon it that is irresistible

17 This has been covered elsewhere: *God: His Existence and His Nature,* tr. Rose (St. Louis: Herder, 1934), I, 302 *if.;* II, 55-57.

18Ia IIae, q. 10, a.2.

and perfectly adequate to its capacity for loving. That is why in heaven love of God is not free but follows necessarily upon the beatific vision.[19] It is above liberty, as the very first movements of our emotions are below it.

God alone can fully satisfy our thirst. The living waters flow from Him, their source. The realization of this truth made St. Catherine of Siena say that, if we wish to quench our thirst at the cup of a lasting friendship, we must keep it refilled from the source of living water or, soon exhausted, it will fail us and we shall go thirsty.

Even alone, when unerring, reason can reveal to us the possibility and, more than that, the necessity of loving God the author of our nature. In this, experience confirms reason. Reason points to the commandment of love of God as the first of the natural law and shows that it virtually contains all the others.[20] As love of truth is the scholar's principle of life; love of art and beauty, the artist's; love of country, the soldier's; so love of God seems to be the principle of every human life. To love God is natural. Reason, even when left to its own resources, realizes that man should love God. Great philosophers have sung the praises of this natural love. And poets, whose lives may have left much to be desired, have, by thinking about tire beauty of the divine perfections, attained to an inefficacious act of natural love of God, to admiration of Him that is full of velleities, and only of velleities.

For us, as we actually are after the Fall, to have an efficacious love of God, the author of our nature, we must have the help of grace and we must ask for it.[21] Without it, we can understand the necessity of such a love; but we cannot succeed in

19 *Ibid.*, q.5, a. 4.
20 *Ibid.*, q.109, a. 3, 4.
21 *Ibid.*, a. 3, 7.

making our own love efficacious. Even if, without grace, we succeeded in loving God, author of our nature, efficaciously and above all things, and managed to observe the natural law in its entirety, our natural love of God would remain infinitely removed from divine and Christian charity. For charity is essentially supernatural and has for its primary object God, the author of grace, in His intimate life.

God's love for all, the basis of our love for Him

No man of genius, no angel, can by his unaided intellect alone, comprehend or conceive of supernatural charity, the loving friendship between God and man.

Often in the Old Testament just men like the patriarchs and prophets are called "friends of God." [22] The Canticle of Canticles speaks symbolically of this strong and tender love of friendship.[23] Our Lord Jesus Christ, by bringing us the fullness of divine revelation, has made it clearer to us than anyone else could by telling us: "I will not now call you servants: for the servant knoweth not what his lord doth. But I have called you friends: because all things whatsoever I have heard of My Father, I have made known to you." [24] Just before this He had said: "As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you. Abide in My love. If you keep My commandments you will abide in My love, as I also have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love than this no man

22 Judith 8: 22; Isa. 41: 8; Wisd. 7: 27; Ps. 138: 17. In John 3: 29, St. John the Baptist is called the friend of the bridegroom.

23 Cant. 1: 15.

24 John 15: 15.

hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do the things that I command you."

Philosophers who recognize the realm of spirit but have not come to the Christian faith sometimes say: "We cannot understand a love of friendship, such as you describe, between man and God. We can certainly have sentiments of admiration, respect, gratitude, and obedience towards God. We can worship Him interiorly and even exteriorly. But how can we love Him as a friend? We have never seen Him. He is so far above us as to be invisible and incomprehensible by His very nature. We obviously owe Him all we have and are; yet we can do nothing for Him in return. Friendship presupposes mutual good will, the possibility of doing good to one another, a certain intercourse or community of life, a common life, if it may be so expressed, that demands mutual revelation of intimate thoughts, a common quest for the same good, and the shared pursuit of one ideal." [25] Between God and us love and intimacy like this seem to be impossible. So argues reason when left to itself.

What reason cannot discover, what the angelic intellect by its own natural powers cannot know, has been revealed to us by God in the days of the Old Testament and brought to us in its fullness by our Lord Jesus Christ. He has made known to us the infinite love of God, who wills our participation in His own intimate life through grace. He has taught us that to make our Father in heaven a fitting return we have only to model our love on His, who first loved us. As St. John says: "By this hath the charity of God appeared towards us, because God hath sent His only-begotten Son into the world, that we

26 Cf. Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Bk. VIH, cd. McKeon (New York: Random House, 1941).

ma[live by Him. In this is charity: not as though we had loved God, but because He hath first loved us, and sent His Son to be a propitiation for our sins. My dearest, if God hath so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 26

From· this text St. Thomas Aquinas concluded that divine charity/ uniting us to God and to one another in Him, is true love of friendship. It certainly implies mutual good will, for, God wills our good, our eternal salvation, and we will His |glory|.that .He be known and^ loved £S He deserves now and forever* Besides, the charity that unites us to Him is founded, like all true friendship, on real community of life, since He communicates to us a participation in His own intimate life, sançtifyjpg^graçe, thef seed jof eternal life and happiness, by which we shall be forever associated in the intimate life of God. Then we shall see Him without intermediary, as He sees Himself; and, so seeing, we shall love Him as He loves Himself.27

To have a deeper understanding of God's uncreated love, the basis of our own supernatural charity, let us consider the nature of true and generous love. Then let us take away all limitations from its qualities, making them infinite, and we shall catch a far, faint glimpse of what God's love is like.

When we love another truly we love him for his own sake, not for ours, not regarding him as something to be used or enjoyed but wishing him well, willing him well. True love is not mere emotion, rising spontaneously at the sight of a lovahle object; it is a love of well-wishing and well-doing. By it we desire and do good to another, loving actively, effectively, and generously.

20 I John 4: 9 f.
27 Ila Ilac, q.23, a.i; *ibid.*, ad 2um.

Love usually demands three things of us: that we go out of self by tending toward the one to whom we would do good jhat we be united to him by a close communion of ideas, sentiments, and desires; that we devote ourselves to him, give ourselves to him, and, if need be, sacrifice ourselves for him, that he may be made better and may reach his final goal.[28]

A real mother images this kind of love. No mere emotional delight in the lovableness of her child contents her. She must both will and do him good, going out of herself, forgetting herself, abandoning all the preoccupations of self-love and egotism to reach out to her little one. When she takes him up, puts her arms around him, and holds him close, it is as though she would become one with him. Wholly and always devoted, her love leaps up to meet his every need, and when he is ill nothing can take her from his side where, day and night, she cares for all his wants. From her he learns to walk and talk and pray; she it is who first awakens his mind, his heart, his soul.

By endowing these qualities of truly generous love with infinity, we can discover something of the meaning of God's love for us. Rightly did Isaias compare His mercy to the tenderness of a mother for her child, because die tenderness of a mother's heart has its source in the infinitely greater goodness of God.

God's uncreated charity for us has ever been and ever will be a benevolent, bountiful, and essentially active love. Such love could not be a merely affective, passive pleasure in what-

[28] Cf. la Ilae, q. 26, a. 4, for the distinction between the love of concupiscence and the more perfect love of friendship, which leads a man to will for his friend what is good for him. In q. 28, a. 3, St. Thomas says that love, especially the love of friendship, draws us out of ourselves and *(ibid.,* a. 1, 2, 3) unites us to our friend, makes us live in him and hold his interest so dear that we are willing to sacrifice our own good for his.

ever is lovable in us. All that makes us lovable in God's eyes comes from Him and is given to us only by His sovereignly free and gratuitous love. Whatever is lovable is good, and every good of every order can come only from the source of all good things, Goodness itself. From all eternity God necessarily loves this infinite Goodness which is Himself. In it He finds His essential beatitude. He had no need to create us, for He is no greater, no happier, no wiser for having created the universe.[29] Freely He willed to manifest His goodness, to have us participate in His own inner riches. He willed to radiate goodness as He made the sun to radiate light. The same God who filled the air with the song of birds also willed the mighty hymn of His infinite praises to roll out from Him to other minds and other lives. "The heavens show forth the glory of God." God's love is creative. Far from supposing lovableness in those He loves, He creates it in them by His pure, sovereignly free, and gratuitous benevolence.[30]

Out of wholly gratuitous love God has given us existence, the life of the body and of the spiritual and immortal soul; He keeps us in existence and gives us, besides, the help necessary at each moment to make those intellectual and volitional acts indispensable for attaining goodness and truth. Even what seems most exclusively our own—the free determination to choose good rather than evil—comes to us from Him. The disorder and failure so often adulterating our acts comes from us exclusively, for it requires only a defective cause.[31] When we choose the good, then God, as first cause, first intellect, first liberty, and source of every good, makes us choose it by an act

20 Ia, q. 19, a.3.
20 Ibid., q. 20, a. 3, 4.
21 Ia IIae, q.79, a.i, 2.

at once vital and free.[32] He is closer to us than we are to ourselves. If all that comes to us from Him were taken out of our lives, we would be, in the strictest sense of the term, absolutely nothing. Two dogmas serve as the basis for Christian humility: creation *ex nihilo* and the necessity of grace for the least act effective for salvation.

God has loved us from all eternity. He made His love manifest at the moment of creation. And in the daily creation of souls, In the creation of my individual soul, which He freely maintains in existence at this instant, He renews and reenacts that moment. In the beginning He gave the first man natural life, a gift of love. This gift Adam was to transmit to us all. By a still more gratuitous love, He gave him also something immeasurably above the natural life of men and angels alike, the life of grace, a participation in the divine life properly so called. The gift of eternal life, of seeing and loving God as He sees and loves Himself, was given to the first man to be passed on to all his children.

Just as he had received it for himself and for us,[33] the first man "lost for himself and for us" [34] the seed of glory, sanctifying grace. He failed to appreciate the value of divine life and in his blindness preferred the infinitely inferior life of "the knowledge of good and evil." He chose a life which, so the temptation said, was to be his own to lead, free of any necessity to ask God for light or to obey Him. To living faith and infused wisdom, to divine contemplation and supernatural love of God united to humility and obedience, man preferred a mode of knowledge of the natural order. He

32 Sec la, q.19, a.8; q.83, a. I, ad 3um; q.105, a.4, 5; la Ilae, q.10, a.4, c. and ad 3um.

33 Council of Trent, sess. V, Dcnzinger, no. 789.

M la, q.95, a. I, 2, 3; q. too, a. 1, *2;* Ila Ilae, q.81, a. 1, 3.

chose to be his own master, to rely on himself and his self-collected pseudo-data, instead of confiding in God, the first truth and sovereign good. Through his own fault, he fell from original justice and the heights of sanctity where the Creator had placed him.

God's love followed us in our downfall and misery. To pardon us, God could have contented Himself with sending a prophet to express His forgiveness. Freely He willed to do infinitely more: "For God so loved the world as to give His only-begotten Son; that whosoever believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." [85] Infinite mercy could do no more. At the same time, according to the decree of the divine liberty, the utmost requirements of justice itself were to be satisfied by the Savior's sacrifice. "Mercy and truth have met each other." [38]

We fell, and God willed to stoop down to us as a mother stoops down to a hurt child. He chose to descend, in a sense, to our level that He might raise us up to His. He stripped Himself, as it were, of the brightness of His glory, of His infinite majesty, not willing to appear in the splendor of His magnificence as He did on Mt. Sinai when He showed Himself to Moses. He willed to empty Himself, so St. Paul put it,[37] that He might be found according to our measure. He took a body and soul like ours and was seen in the form of a little child in the lowliest circumstances, in the ranks of the poorest, that all might come to Him without fear. For thirty years He who could have forced everyone to accept Him by the ascendancy of His mind, His character, and His miracles, lived the hidden life of a poor village carpenter of Nazareth.

80 John 3:16.
80 Ps. 84: **II.**
87 "Exinanivit semetipsum"; Phil. 2: *7.*

By His lowliness and abasement our God has made Himself one of us. In flesh like ours, He shared our life, willed our happiness, performed our duties, bore our sufferings, felt our weariness, wept our tears. He has taken us into His arms. More than that, on Holy Thursday He, the Word of God, of His own will kissed our feet. Finally, by taking on Himself all our offenses, He has given Himself for us, sacrificed Himself for us. He has died a victim for us, shed His blood in cruel suffering, that the heritage of eternal life, which in our blindness we despised and lost, might be once more ours.

Well might St. Paul speak of this as God's "exceeding charity," [88] an "excess of love," for it infinitely exceeds anything within the natural compass of human reason or angelic intellect. St. Paul can even call it "foolishness," [39] for by it the narrow calculations of human wisdom are, in a sense, reversed. As a mother, in the folly of her love, offers herself as a victim that the son who has insulted and despised her may be brought back to the right path, so God, out of love, dies For His own creature, who has despised and shunned Him. This is the folly of the Cross beyond and above reason, the remedy for another very real folly which falls far short of reason, the folly of sin: of lust, avarice, envy, and pride, and of forgetfulness and hatred of God.

The evil that destroys reason is far inferior to it; the remedy that heals reason is infinitely above it. Rationalists make no mistake in saying that reason, left to its own resources, cannot understand it; for this so-called folly belongs to a higher order, beyond the mind's natural reach. In such abysses of love reason is lost; only the supernatural discernment of the saints

88 Eph. 2: 4.
291 Cor. 1: 18.

can penetrate these depths. Only in heaven shall we see the sublime and the infinite fitness of the mystery of the redemptive Incarnation. To grasp it as it is in itself, we need an immediate vision of the divine essence and of the uncreated personality of the Word made flesh, whom love led to die for us.

In heaven we shall see that goodness is essentially communicative, and that the higher its order the more intimately and fully it tends to communicate itself.40 We shall see that God the Father, in the interior expression of His thought, communicates to the Word within Him, His Son, not only a participation in His nature, but His whole indivisible nature without loss or multiplication. He thus gives to His Word to be "God of God, Light of Light, true God of true God." He begets His Son in that single moment which never passes, the unique "now" of changeless eternity. We shall see that the Father and the Son, by loving each other, spirate personal love, the Holy Ghost, die Third Person of the Blessed Trinity, the flaming spiritual current that unites the first two persons in intimate communion.41 The three live upon the

40 *Bonum est essentialiter deffusivum sui.* Cf. St. Thomas, *Contra Gentes,* Bk. IV, chap, **i1,** where he shows the truth of this principle in outlining the degrees of being and finally by applying it to God Himself, in order to throw light on the mystery of the Trinity. See also la, q.27, a. 1, ad sum.

41 We distinguish in God: (1) the c>£cnt$l love common to the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity; (2) the notional love by which Fatlîêr*ànd Son spirate the l loly Ghost, an act analogous to the generation of the Word by die Father; and (3) the personal love which is the term of this active spiration—the Holy Ghost. Cf. la, q.41, a.fi.As the Council of Florence defined, the only real distinction in God is the opposition of relations between the three divine Persons.

As to the love God bears for us, it is only virtually distinct from the essential love common to the three divine Persons, by which They necessarily love the divine goodness. Yet God's love for us, which led Him to create and preserve us. is free, for God need not have created us and He would have been infinitely wise and good and would have enjoyed infinite happiness just the same. Cf. la, q. 19, a. 2,3,7.

same infinite Truth by the same intellectual act, upon the same infinite Goodness by the same essential act of love. They are distinct only through the relations of paternity, filiation, and spiration, according to which they are "distinguished as die opposite terms of a relation."

Goodness being diffusive of itself and the more intimately and abundantly so as it ascends in the various orders of being, we shall also see that God has freely willed to communicate Himself as much as possible to humankind by uniting Himself "in person" to the humanity of the Savior in such a way that the Word of God and the holy soul and body of Jesus together make but one and the same person, one and the same being; somewhat as in each one of us the soul and body, despite their distinction, constitute a single whole, a person really one.[42]

Moreover, God has willed that the acts of love Christ made for us as He hung dying on the cross should have an infinitely meritorious and satisfactory value in the uncreated person of the Word, who truly loved us in those acts of His human will whereby He sacrificed Himself for us,[43] while, in strict justice, He merited for us as the constituted head of humankind. "Therefore as by the offense of one, unto all men to condemnation; so also by the justice of one, unto all men to justifica-

42 Illa, q.i, a. i: "To each thing that is befitting which belongs to it by reason of its very nature. . . . But the very nature of God is goodness. . . . Hence what belongs to the essence of goodness befits God. But it belongs to the essence of goodness to communicate itself to others. . . . HenceTt belongs to the essence of the highest good to communicate itself in the highest manner to the creature, and this is brought about chiefly by His so joining created nature to Himself that one Person is made up of these three—the Word, a soul and flesh, as St. Augustine says (De *Trin.,* xiii). Hence it is manifest that it was fitting that God should become incarnate." In us body and soul constitute one and the same person and also one and the same nature, whereas in our Lord the divine and human natures, although united in the same Person, remained infinitely distant from each other as natures.

43 Illa, q. I, a.a, ad turn.

tion of life."[44] Such is the priceless worth of the cross of Christ.

But our Lord has, in a sense, gone even farther than this; He has abased Himself yet more, united Himself even more closely to us, given Himself to us still more generously in the Eucharist. In this sacrament He is, in a way, emptied of Himself, being willing to lie hidden under the humble appearances of bread and wine, docile alike under the hands of the holy or the sacrilegious priest that He may be brought to all, even the repentant criminal about to die. He has willed to descend so low that the poorest missionary, with only a bit of bread at his disposal, can make Him really and substantially present among the tribes he is evangelizing. Under these poor appearances the sacred body of Jesus is present, together with His soul and divinity. The host can be divided in half, then in quarters, and so on until only a small particle, almost imperceptible to bodily eyes, is left; and faith tells us that under this particle are found the soul and body of the Savior, His divinity and omnipotence, and all those infinite riches He wills us to share more abundantly each day.

The Word made flesh is on the altar. During Mass He continues to offer Himself for us and to unite to Himself all who desire to receive the Eucharist. To saints like Catherine of Siena it has been granted to drink in ecstasy at the sacred wound of the heart of Jesus; all Christians have the daily privilege of drinking spiritually at the same source through Holy Communion.

Christ could not have given Himself to us any more than He has, willingly becoming our food, being eaten by us. The Eucharistic Bread, so superior to us, is not assimilated by us,

44 Rom. 5: 18. Cf. *Summa,* IIIa, q. 19, a.4.

but it daily assimilates us more and more to Christ. It transforms us into Him and increases our vitality as members of the mystical body of which Jesus is the head.

We are accustomed to these marvels. Habit, degenerating at times into routine, prevents us from admiring what is absolutely gratuitous and sublime in the infinite mercy of our God, who thus stoops down to our misery. Thomas Aquinas always kept this admiration alive within him.

O res mirabilis: manducat Dominum
Pauper servus et humilis!

This goes beyond anything our reason could of itself conceive or our heart naturally desire. Not only do the expressions of God's love as the author of grace satisfy our deepest natural longings; they immeasurably exceed them and likewise surpass the natural knowledge and desire of any angelic mind, whether actual or possible.[45] Going beyond our natural yearnings, they arouse in us the higher and essentially supernatural aspirations of infused hope and divine charity.

Our return of love

"Let us therefore love God; because God first hath loved us."[46] It would be well for us to recall what return the saints have made to God for His love, and then see what our own response ought to be.

The saints are not content to love God emotionally, to admire His goodness intellectually, to think with poetic enthusiasm of His divine perfections. They understand Christ's words: "Not every one that saith to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doth the will

45 Ia, q.62, a. 2.
46 1 John 4: 19.

of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the kingdom of heaven."[47] He gave this assurance especially for those who do the will of God not merely through duty and with resignation, those who, even in the midst of trials, do it out of love and with generosity, courageously allowing themselves to be loved and purified by God, refusing Him nothing and truly following the example of our Savior who died for us. No saint measures his charity by the sweetness of the sensible consolations sometimes accorded in prayer, but loves deeply with a love rooted in the will. The love of the saints lives on in the midst of prolonged and barren aridity and is nourished by the hard bread of tribulation as well as the milk of consolation, is compounded of strength as well as of tenderness, and grows more and more generous by continually giving even when it seems to be done with receiving. Love like this makes the saints burn with desire to have God's name hallowed, His kingdom come, His will done on earth as it is in heaven. They hunger and thirst for justice, not with the brief flare of callow enthusiasm but with an ardor born of the gift of fortitude and of charity that endures through struggles and contradictions of all kinds. These they surmount, or rather are lifted across and go on with God, towards God, keeping their peace and sharing it with others.

A saint's love.strives to reproduce whatever is imitable in God's love, to model itself on God's love so as to make Him a like return. God has come down to our level. In the ardor of His love He has lowered Himself so far as to become the man of sorrows, covered with our sins, "a worm and no man,"[48] an abasement we simply cannot comprehend. To

47 Matt. 7: 21.
48 Ps. 21: 7.

make such love some return, the saints reduce themselves to the level of this God who was made less than they. They go down from the throne of their self-love to stand together with their God, stripped of glory and emptied of self. They love Him in His awful abasement more dian any prince has even been loved in his most brilliant triumph.

St. Dominic went by preference into that part of Languedoc where the Albigensians ridiculed and abused him in every way. He experienced a holy joy in being so treated, the joy of becoming more like die humiliated Christ. And thereafter when he talked to those poor misguided people, it was no longer a man who spoke to them but the Lord who spoke by his mouth and gave him the power to convert their hearts. St. Benedict Joseph Labre was as eager to follow those who insulted him as he was to flee from those who praised him, deeming himself unworthy of any good words. In different ways all the saints find a need to abase themselves out of love for our humiliated, scourged, and stricken Lord.

The Word of God united Himself to us and took on our human ways that He might live with us. The desire of the saints is to take on divine ways that they may live with Him. Many of diem have retired into solitude to live in perpetual recollection. Many others, kept in the world by duty, have, like St. Catherine of Siena, made an interior cell in the core of their hearts so that their conversation has been with the indwelling Trinity, whom they have served as living temples. They have preferred God to everything else besides, loved Him above all other things, without division and without exclusion, loving all men in Him, their legitimate affections raised to a new level by their love of Him. Fired in the flame

of charity, natural love becomes a burning thirst for the salvation of souls.

Our Lord gave Himself to us on the cross. The saints give themselves to God, often even by martyrdom, that His name may be glorified, that His kingdom may come, and His will be done. And when they do not shed their blood as a testimony to Him, they may experience a martyrdom no less heroic, the martyrdom of the heart, a kind of slow death in the midst of daily griefs and trials of all kinds. In a wholly practical way they understand and follow the example of St. Paul, who said: "I now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh, for His body, which is the Church."[49] Nothing is lacking in the divine Passion itself. It has infinite and superabundant value. We alone lack something, the reflected reproduction of Christ within us. This is ours to give our Lord by allowing Him to assimilate us to Himself, by working in Him, with Him, and by Him for the salvation of souls through the means He Himself has chosen, prayer and immolation. Our Lord is at once a victim and a priest. He makes all His priests participate in His priesthood and requires all His saints to share with Him in some way His character of victim. Thus man's growing configuration to the crucified Word of God is effected and God's love receives a return of love from His saints.

What should our return be? It should be love of the same essentially supernatural quality as that received in baptism and restored by absolution, if we have been so unhappy as to lose it. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and

48 Col. 1:24.

with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." [50] Consequently, as we have already repeated after St. Augustine[51] and St. Thomas,[52] the perfection of charity falls under this commandment not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized, but as the end toward which all men ought to tend, each according to his condition, one in marriage, another in religious life, another in the priesthood. Everyone in the world ought to grow in charity continually. Growth in charity is progress towards God. As soon as we make up our minds to stop before reaching the end of our journey, we cease to be travelers toward eternity.[53] Our souls become retarded, like children who stop growing before reaching adulthood and so become dwarfs. The road toward eternity is for travel, not for rest. The Fathers of the Church tell us that he who does not go forward on the way to God goes back.

We shall even see that the progress of charity, effected especially by daily Communion, ought in principle to advance more and more swiftly. A stone falls faster and faster as it nears the earth; so should our souls advance more and more quickly towards God as they draw nearer to Him and are increasingly attracted by Him.[54] The sublimity of the First Commandment being what it is, we cannot doubt that actual graces are progressively offered to us that we may attain its end. Our Lord does not command the impossible. He does exhort us to ask His help.

This being so, we ought to ask ourselves whether we are falling behind on our way to God, whether we are willing

50 Luke 10:27.

51 *De perfectione justitiae,* VIII.

52 IIa IIae, q. 184, a.3.

52 Cf. St. Thomas, *in Epist. ad Hebr.,* VI, X.

54 Cf. *ibid.,* X, 25 on the words *"tanto magis quanto viderilis appropinquantem diem."* See also Ia IIae, q.35, a. 6.

enough to come down from the throne of our self-love and our pride in order to stoop down, after the example of the saints, to the abasement of Jesus Christ, which perhaps is more alive in certain souls we look down upon than in our own. Are we willing to die to our own judgment and our own will that we may be united in a perpetual communion of ideas and of will with Christ Jesus, not only at prayertime but all day long? Is our soul's habitual conversation with Him, our Savior, our best friend, our counselor in all life's duties and affairs? Are we sufficiently willing to be devoted, to sacrifice ourselves when necessary, that we may become each day more like Him who died for us, that we may be associated in some small way at least in the work of redemption before receiving a share in His glorious life for all eternity?

To reach the perfection of love of God and neighbor, two methods, it is said, lie before us: one descending, the other ascending. The first consists in beginning with the consideration of the great mystery of God's love for us: "Let us therefore love God, because God first hath loved us." This is the way we have been discussing, the one the saints have followed in contemplating the sorrowful Passion. The second method consists in taking ourselves as the starting point, in examining our conscience, our failings, our predominant fault, in considering, too, the many virtues to be practiced in this and that circumstance. Certainly we cannot neglect these practices, but we should make all such examinations under the higher light of the great mystery of love; otherwise the multitude of our own failings and of the virtues to be acquired will confuse us. Moreover, virtue has no strong attraction for us when not contemplated in our Lord and in our Lady. It is incumbent on us, then, to go to the very heart of the interior life, to

charity, which ought to inform, animate, and vivify all the virtues, and, that we may grow in charity, to contemplate how Christ has loved us. We are full of faults; alone we shall not succeed in correcting them.[65] We must beg the Savior to come to us and put our house in order with us. For love of Him, let us allow Him to lead us on the way He has chosen for us. He is the Good Shepherd who leads His sheep into eternal pastures, calling each by name[68] and teaching them, if they will but listen to Him, all He Himself desires of them on the way to eternity.

65 Ia Ilae, q. 109, a.6, c. and ad lum.
6e John 10:3.

CHAPTER II

The Problem of Pure Love

This we know: God's love for us demands a return. How pure, how disinterested should our return be? Will it always be tainted by a certain self-love? How far must we sacrifice love of self to arrive at a truly pure love of Him who first loved us?

In the Encyclical *Studiorum ducem* of June 27, 1923, His Holiness Pope Pius XI strongly emphasized the following point of St. Thomas' doctrine: the commandment to love God has no limits; the perfection of charity falls under this precept, of course, not as matter or that which is to be immediately realized, but as die end toward which every Christian ought to tend, each according to his condition.[1] Whether in religious life or in the world, all ought to draw ever nearer to God, their last end. As nature's law requires a child to grow under penalty of becoming a dwarf, so the law of our earthly pilgrimage requires that travelers on the road toward eternity go ever forward by steps of love, as St. Gregory the Great says, until we reach our journey's end. A road is not for rest or sleep, but for travel. In the way of virtue, according to a traditional adage, "He who does not go forward slips back"; for the law demands advancement and even increasing advancement. The speed of falling bodies increases as they approach the earth's surface; so souls ought in principle to go

1 Encyclical *Studiorum ducem: "Haec igitur a Deo delapsa seu infusa sapientia."*

more quickly towards God the nearer they come to Him and are more attracted by Him.[2]

The doctrine concerning the compass of the commandment of love has often been misunderstood,[3] although it was clearly formulated by the Fathers of the Church, particularly St. Augustine.[4] In the encyclical of January 26,1923, written for the third centenary of St. Francis de Sales, His Holiness Pius XI remarked that the author of the *Treatise on the Love of God* was cognizant of this traditional teaching and gave it clear expression in his works.[5]

If our love of God ought to keep growing until death, evidently it should become ever purer, freer from all egotism and every inordinate love of our own good. This point of doctrine leads us to consider fully the problem of love that we may better understand the relationship of our desire for our own highest good with pure love of God and of His glory. First, we shall recall the way this problem has been stated and the principal solutions it received in the Middle Ages. One of these appears more as an evident tendency then as an explicit theory in some of the works of St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, and other medieval mystics. The other, together with its chief consequences, St. Thomas plainly formulated. A statement of the first viewpoint and the difficulties it leaves unsolved will lead us to an examination of the second, a logical and chronological procedure for, as we shall see, in proposing

2 Cf. *Summa,* Ia Ilae, q.35, a.6.

3 The objections made by Suarez and answered by Passerini have been examined elsewhere. Cf. *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* tr. Doyle, footnotes pp. 179, 187 f.

4 Cf. *De perfectione justitiae,* c. viii: *"Cur ergo non praeciperetur homini ista perfectio, quamvis eam in hac vita nemo habeat?"* It is commanded as the end toward which all ought to tend.

5 Cf. St. Francis de Sales, *Treatise on the Love of God,* Bk. III, chap. 1.

his own solution St. Thomas was aware of the insufficiency of the one already proposed. His has its foundation in Aristotle's views on human nature and the teaching of St. Augustine and Dionysius on the love of God.

We shall draw inspiration from the works of the Dominicans of the seventeenth century, Chardon, Piny,® and Massoulié.7 We shall also make use of the thought-provoking work of Father Pierre Rousselot, S.J.8 However, instead of turning aside from St. Thomas' doctrine with him, we shall keep to it, bringing our study to a close with St. Thomas' solution of the difficulties raised by the other opinion. The recent study of Abbé Eugene Kulesza on Richard of St. Victor 8 contains a criticism of some of Father Rousselot's conclusions and can be read with profit. We may throw open to question whether these two conceptions are as opposed as the latter says and ask ourselves whether we can find, within the metaphors of the first, the rough draft of the second, which alone achieves an exact terminology.10

* Chardon and Piny appeal to experience and introduce a more personal note in their writings than Massoulié, who follows the letter of St. Thomas more closely. In his *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France,* Vol. VIII, pp. 25 fi., and 91 fi., Bremond gives a just appreciation of these too little known spiritual writers.

7 See Massoulié, *Traité de l'amour de Dieu* (Brussels ed., 1866), in which he explains the nature, purity, and perfection of charity according to the principles of the Fathers and especially of St. Thomas. Cf. also the articles published in the *Revue Thomiste,* 1905-1907, "La charité d'après Saint Thomas d'Aquin."

8 *L'histoire du problème de l'amour au Moyen-Age,* Collection Cl. Baeumker, *Beitrâge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters* (Miinster, 1908), Vol. VI.

8 *La doctrine mystique de Richard de Saint-Victor,* University of Fribourg thesis, pub. by *La Vie Spirituelle.*

10 This seems to be Massoulié's opinion. Cf. *op. cit.,* pp. 290-315. Chardon and Piny must have leaned toward it. Father Rousselot makes several remarks (p. 57) moderating his own stand. The reasoning of Roland-Gosselin, O.P., in the article "Le désir du bonheur et l'existence de Dieu," *Revue des Sciences Phil, et Théol.* (April, 1924, p. 165), inclines one to moderate it still further. See also Richard Egenter, *Gottesfreundschajt,* "Die Lehre von der Gottesfreundschaft in der Scholastik und Mystik des 12 und 13 Jahrhunderts" (Augsburg: Filser Verlag, 1929).

ARTICLE I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

When reading good works like Massoulié's on the subject, we should like to see at the very beginning, before any search for a solution is instituted, a deep study of the problem itself. This was St. Thomas' method. Following Aristotle, he first examined the difficulties of the question and the frequently contrary answers already given by earlier authors; afterward he revealed the lofty intellectual reaches of those principles to which recourse must be had, leading us up to them little by little as toward a summit from which the light of the solution emanates.[11]

This method of procedure has lead St. Thomas, apropos of the question "Ought man, by charity, to love God more than himself?" to give an apt statement of the problem of love in the following difficulty: "One loves a thing in so far as it is one's own good. Now the reason for loving a thing is more loved than the thing itself which is loved for that reason, even as the principles which are the reason for knowing a thing are more known. Therefore man loves himself more than any other good loved by him. Therefore he does not love God more than himself." [12] Elsewhere St. Thomas has proposed

11 Massoulii brings out the difficulties of the problem only in the seventh chapter of the first part of his work, after having explained St. Thomas' principles, an approach which fails to reveal their value. St. Thomas had good reasons for showing us the difficulty of a question before proposing the principles that resolve it. The objections placed at the beginning of his articles are a part of the *Summa* too little read.

12 IIa IIae, q. 26, a.3, 2 ob. In Ia, q.6o, a. 5, 2 ob., the same difficulty is formulated as follows: "Further, that which is cause of anything having a certain quality, must possess that quality in a higher degree. But everyone loves another with natural love for his own personal sake: because he loves it as good for himself. Therefore the angel does not love God more than self with natural love."

the same difficulty in another form. "Nature," he says, "is always self-centered in its operation, for we behold every agent acting naturally for its own preservation. But nature's operation would not be self-centered were it to tend toward anything else more than nature itself." 13

In the light of these texts of St. Thomas, Father Rousselot writes: "In abstract terms the problem of love could be formulated like this: Is love without egotism possible? And if it is possible, what relationship has such pure love of another to love of self, seemingly the basis of all natural tendencies? The problem of love is analogous to the problem of knowledge. In the latter we ask how a being can have consciousness (or at least knowledge) of that which is not himself; in the former, how a being can be drawn by desire toward that which is not its own good." 14

This seems to be a good statement of the problem, except the word "egotism," which, to my mind, creates an equivocation, for it generally denotes a disordered love of self, which cannot be found, as we shall see, in the very essence of the primary natural inclination.15 Hence it is better to avoid using the expression and to keep St. Thomas' terms as quoted.

After asking ourselves how a knowing being can acquire knowledge not only of its own impressions but of extra-

13 Ia, q. 60, a. 5, 3 ob.

14 *Op. cit.,* p. I.

15 See Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics,* Bk. IX, chap. 8, for the two meanings of love of self. One is noble and commendable; the other, the opposite kind, we call egoism. Because the word "egoism" has an essentially derogatory meaning, we cannot apply it to God and speak of "the transcendental egoism by which He made all things for His own glory." To do so would be a stupid error, for egoism, unlike goodness, is not an absolute perfection without any trace of imperfection. The egoist loves himself more than his family, his country, even the Sovereign Good, and certainly God cannot love Himself more than the Essential Good which is Himself, and if He had not made all things to manifest His own glory, He would not have ordered them all to their supreme good.

mental realities, how our intellect can attain to that which is true in itself and universally, independently of us, we seek to discover how we can love another with a love not subordinated to the desire for our own good. Is pure love of another—above all, of God—possible? And if it is, what relation has it to our desire for personal happiness?

Extreme and evidently erroneous philosophical solutions

To the two great problems so stated, two radically extreme and contrary solutions have been given. These are subjectivism and pantheistic realism. Subjectivism denies or throws open to doubt the objective value of our intellect and, consequently, the authority of its object, extra-mental being or the truly real. Likewise subjectivism does not recognize die rights of the object of the will, the good, and particularly the right of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all things. In antiquity a tendency toward this position marked the Sophists and Skeptics; today it characterizes the modern subjectivists. It plainly leads to utilitarianism [18] or, at best, to a certain love of human dignity that makes a pretense of having no special obligation toward God, as though He were not the clearly evident author of every good and Himself the supreme good.[17]

18 The empirical nominalism of men like John Stuart Mill prevents them from getting beyond utilitarianism to the correct idea of the true good, which stands above the delectable and the useful and, because it is beyond the reach of both the external and internal senses, can be grasped only by reason.

17 Although Kant maintains that morality presupposes disinterestedness and has nothing to do with the desire for happiness, which he, like Rousseau, connects too closely with sensual appetency, he fails to reach the notion of love of God for His own sake, since he does not recognize that we have special duties towards God. The principle maintained by Rousseau in the social order, that man himself formulates the law which he obeys, was applied by Kant to the moral sphere. To his mind, it is befitting that we fulfill our duties toward ourselves and our fellow men re-

The solution radically contrary to this, absolute realism, is no less erroneous. It confounds being in general, or universal being, with the divine Being, and good in general or the universal good, with the divine Good. It leads to pantheism, reduces all things to God, identifies all things with Him, and so denies their own proper existence. Parmenides held this doctrine in antiquity; Spinoza with his pantheistic ontologism maintains it among the moderns. It implicitly denies personal beatitude, contenting itself with an impersonal immortality entirely different from the immortality about which Christian faith speaks to us.[18]

Evidently Catholic theologians could not go so far astray as these two extremes, although the nominalists of the fourteenth century came strikingly close to the subjectivist position [19] and, inversely, Master Eckhart apparently arrived at the frontiers of pantheism when, after having taught in mystical language that creatures are nothing, that is, nothing of themselves, he seems to have asserted that in strict philosophical terms they are absolutely nothing.[20] This view

ligiously, as if their obligation for us depended on God, and he concedes that morality docs imply the postulate of a future life and allow for an accord between happiness and virtue. For Kant, however, all this serves as a complement to morality, not as its foundation. Cf. *Critique of Pure Reason,* Methodology, chap. 2, sect. 2. He thinks that God could not have created us for His own glory but only for our happiness and personal dignity; humanity is an end in itself, and for God to have created all things for His own glory would have been egoism. Kant fails to see that, as the councils express it, God so willed to manifest His sovereign goodness and He is neither greater nor happier for having created the universe.

18 In Spinoza's eyes, intellectual love of self and love of God are one and the same thing. The love of God is identified with the uncreated love God has for Himself. It is God Himself who loves Himself in us with a necessary love, excluding free will. Hence man can neither sin nor merit, properly speaking. Cf. *Ethica,* V, p. 36.

10Denzinger, *Enchiridion,* nos. 553 if.

20 Ibid., nos. 526 f. Eckhart sets off toward the opposite extreme of nominalism in the direction of absolute realism which confounds, as can be seen in Spinoza,

amounts to a denial of the very effect of the creative act.

But, be these indefensible and quite exceptional paradoxes as they may, it can be said that Catholic theologians have been preserved from these extreme errors by faith in the existence of God, the sovereignly free Creator, really and essentially distinct from the world and from all created spirits. They have been saved, too, by the great commandment that dominates the Decalogue in the Old Testament and is the spirit of die New: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with thy whole strength and with thy whole mind." [21]

The Scholastics generally have stated the problem of love in the loftiest and most profound concrete terms possible: Are men and angels led by their nature to love God more than themselves or can divine grace alone effect this? Father Rousselot says: "It seems that Scholasticism could not have concentrated the question in a happier formula. No other would have been at once so concrete and so profound." [22] Are not free creatures commanded to love virtuously the same God who is both the author of their natural appetites and their only last end? Is He not the sum of all goodness? If, therefore, love of our own good and pure love of another can be reconciled, that reconciliation should take place in love of God, an analysis of which ought to give us principles for judging other disinterested affections.[23]

being in general with the divine being, intellect in general with the divine intellect. This way of thought leads to the statement that all created substances and their faculties "are only words," *flatus vocis.* In this sense pantheistic realism leads to nominalism, and tile two extremes meet.

21 Deut. 6: 5; Matt. 22:37; Mark 12: 30; Luke 10: 27.

22 *Op. àt.,* p. I.

22 *Ibid.*

Contrary heresies to be avoided

The problem has not been solved by the fact that all scholastic theologians recognize God as our last end and the object of our eternal beatitude. The difficulty reappears as expressed by St. Thomas: "A man loves God as much as he loves to enjoy God. But a man loves himself as much as he loves to enjoy God; since this is the highest good a man can wish for himself. Therefore man is not bound, out of charity, to love God more than himself." [24] In other words, if we have two loves, love of personal happiness and love of God more than self, which is the more fundamental, which is the primordial love—if not in the concrete order of psychological phenomenon, at least metaphysically, in the very essence of the first natural inclination of our will?

It seems that, if love of God is derived from love of our own good, it lacks purity and can become purified only if grace in some way destroys nature by demanding the sacrifice of our desire for personal happiness. To retain that desire would entail a certain affective subjectivism. If, on the contrary, our nature itself inclines us to love God in Himself, objectively, more than ourselves, grace seems unnecessary to attain to it and we lean, it will be said, toward a Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian naturalism reminiscent of the pantheistic confusion of our nature with the nature of God.

In the Middle Ages the question had not yet been stated with the sharpness Fénelon gave to it later. Nevertheless theologians of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries did have to explain in their treatises on charity how we are to understand St. Paul's words: "I have great sadness and continual

24 IIa IIae, q.a6, a.3, 3 ob.

sorrow in my heart. For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ for my brethren; who are my kinsmen according to the flesh; who are Israelites." 25 Moses had said the same thing in Exodus 32:31-33: "This people hath sinned a heinous sin, and they have made to themselves gods of gold. Either forgive them this trespass, or if thou do not, strike me out of the book that Thou hast written." And the Lord answered: "He that hath sinned against Me, him will I strike out of My book." St. Thomas has given a sublime and fearless explanation of these words of both St. Paul and Moses.20 We shall quote it later.

It was inevitable that the problem should be stated thus: What is primordial in the natural tendency of our will: love of our own good or love of God for Himself? If, in a virtuous life, these two loves converge, they are either coordinated or subordinated. But every coordination supposes subordination to a principle of order. As St. Thomas says, many soldiers are coordinated in view of a common action only if all are subordinated to their leader.27 Neither natural love of our own good nor love of God in preference to ourselves can be subordinated to some more radical principle or higher end. Necessarily, then, one of these two loves has to be subordinated to the other. Which of the two is more fundamental? So the question becomes clearer and clearer and we can more easily foresee what errors we are to avoid.

If every created nature, ours, the angels' too, tends to love its own good, its own personal happiness first and most, how can this primordial tendency be reconciled with the certainly

25 Rom. 9: 2-4.
28 *In Ep. ad Rom.,* ix, 3.
27 C£. la Ilac, q. 100, a. 6.

realizable precept to love God more than ourselves and above all things? If this natural tendency is truly primordial, will it not be found even in our love of God? Will not our love of Him be always more or less mercenary, touched by self-interest and tainted by egotism, unless grace, by remitting original sin and gradually healing us of its effects, comes to correct our very nature, particularly the essential constitution of our will? Must not grace in some way destroy nature by inspiring us to the heroic sacrifice of our desire for personal happiness? Fénelon thought so.[28] If he is right, then, despite the loftiness of the words "pure love," such a grace, being in some way destructive of nature, is (as Baius later and erroneously held) [28] a hard remedy for nature's defect rather than a life principle of an infinitely higher order. If, on the contrary, a primordial tendency impels both men and angels to love God more than themselves, grace seems necessary only to make us accomplish more easily what nature can already do, as the Pelagians say.[30] In neither idea is grace a life principle of a higher order. The Pelagian views it as the complement of a fortunate nature, quite close to the divine, whereas Fénelon and those of his opinion see it as a remedy for a "natural disorder." We may ask: if the farthest extremes of subjectivism and pantheism are avoided, does the mind still waver between the two less distant extremes: either toward Pelagian naturalism or toward the pseudo-supernaturalism of Baius, revived, in a sense, by the Modernists? If here, as in other cases too, there are masters who well deserve the title of *doctor oscillans,* no one can say the same of St. Thomas, as we are about to see.

28 Cf. Denzingcr, *Enchiridion,* nos. 1328, 1333, 1336.
20 Cf. *ibid.,* nos. 1021, 1023, 1024, 1034, 1038.
80 Ibid., nos. 105, 178 *if.*

All theologians are plainly in accord on this point: to arrive at a pure love of God we must mortify in ourselves the concupiscence of the flesh and of the eyes, the pride of life, and all disordered appetites. And we must do it even to arrive at that contempt of self spoken of by all Christian authors when explaining the words of our Lord, "Let him deny himself," and in treating of sin and its effects, of contrition, and the degrees of humility. But in grievous purifying trials, when a man's own misery is so apparent to him that he thinks his salvation is in grave danger, how is perfect abandonment to God's good pleasure to be reconciled with desire for personal happiness? St. Thomas was aware of this question,[31] for the problem it contains is of interest not only in these extreme cases but for the orientation of the whole of life, since it concerns the essence of charity and our will's fundamental natural inclination. Without doubt original sin wounded and weakened this faculty's natural inclination to virtue, and our personal sins have weakened it still more. None the less it has kept its intangible essence as a purely spiritual faculty,[32] and the question now under consideration concerns the intimate relations that actually exist between nature and grace within the will.

Hence the importance of the question: What primordial inclination lies within the very essence of our natural will? Love of our own good? Or a natural love of God? Is it, at the very least, a natural love of a true good transcending the useful and the pleasurable, a good that is good in itself? For ex-

[31] Not only St. Thomas' Commentary on the Epistle to the Romans, ix, 3, but many other passages in his works make this plain to us.

[32] Ia IIae, q.85, a.i.

ample, do we love truth and justice in themselves and above ourselves, more than any particular personal perfection they bring to us? The true solution of this problem treated by the great theologians of the Middle Ages, later by Bossuet and Fénelon and in a lower order by Spinoza, Kant, and the German idealists, should contain virtually, if it is satisfactorily formulated, the whole theology and the whole metaphysics of love.

To the problem so stated two solutions were given in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. For some, they really differ; for others, one is a rough draft, the other, a finished work literally rather than metaphorically expressed. The latter, explicitly formulated by St. Thomas, reached the status of doctrine; the former is found implicit in many sermons and commentaries on the Psalms, the Canticle of Canticles, and the Epistles of St. Paul, wherever there is a question of the intensity of the love of God in the hearts of the saints. The works of St. Bernard produced in the latter half of his life presented it in a mystical form kept within fitting limits.[33] Richard of St. Victor emphasized it in his decidedly debatable theory of the Trinity.[34] Abelard gave it a speculative and dialectical form, believing that from it the necessity of creation had to be deduced (a conclusion incompatible with dogma), and reaching an idea of pure love approximating Fénelon's later view. Abelard died in 1142; St. Bernard, who combatted his errors and, therefore, his doctrine of the necessity of creation, lived until 1153; Richard of St. Victor, probably until 1173.

83 Cf. *Sermones in Cantica, P.L.,* CLXXXIII; *De gradibus humilitatis,* CLXXXII.

84 *De Trinitate,* Bk. III, q.2 *(P.L.,* CXCVI, 916); *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis (P.L.,* CXCVI, 1213 ff.).

ARTICLE II

THE VIEWS OF ST. BERNARD AND RICHARD OF ST. VICTOR

Using numerous texts that can be supplemented by others, —we shall cite the most important—Father Rousselot apparently establishes the characteristics of true love as discussed in the views of St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor. On examination we find that, according to Father Rousselot,[38] disinterestedness, based on the distinction of persons it unites, is true love's first trait; violence and holy folly distinguish it when it becomes intense; and an inherent sufficiency for uniting us to God marks it from first to last.

The disinterestedness of true love

St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor insist particularly on the point that the only perfect love worthy of the name is love of friendship, love of another not for our own but for his sake. Love of self becomes perfect only when we love self for God by going out of self, as it were, to come to Him.[38] Like some theologians of the twelfth century who shared their thoughts, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor are fond of quoting the classical text of St. Gregory the Great: "Charity cannot exist between less than two. Therefore, no one can be said, properly speaking, to have charity for himself, but love of another is potential charity." [37] As charity, like friendship, supposes at least two persons, St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor are led, according to Father Rousselot,[38] to form an ec-

86 Rousselot, *op. cit.,* pp. 58-81.

88 St. Bernard, *On the Love of God,* chap. 8; Richard of St Victor, *De Trinitate,* Bk. III, a.

87 In Evang. hom. 17, no. 1; *P.L.,* LXXVI, 1139.

88 Op. cit., pp. 57 ff.

static conception of love founded, he says, much less on the notion of nature or a natural inclination than on the duality of persons loving each other. By love of friendship we are carried outside of self, *extra se,* toward the beloved: a kind of ecstasy wherein we no longer love our own personal good but the good of another. In the case of love for God, we desire His glory more than anything else and, if need be, even to the sacrifice of our own good. This being so, the principle of this idea is not a natural inclination or a nature which has God for its author, and grace as its elevating principle, but rather the duality of persons united and drawn out of egotism by love.[39]

In the thirteenth century Duns Scotus said that even if God were not our good, our last end, even if He had no relation to the basic inclination of our nature and will, we still could and should love Him above all things, even to sacrificing ourselves for Him, because He is in Himself the sovereign good.[40]

For Richard of St. Victor, true love is so different from love of self and supposes so necessarily a distinction of persons that he thinks he can demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity in this way: Perfect love certainly exists in God; love's first requirement demands two and even three persons loving each other equally; thus to be absolutely pure and disinterested, free from every trace of self-love, envy, and jealousy, the highest of all loves, God's own, demands a distinction of persons, the Trinity.[41]

38 Cf. Rousselot, *op. cit.,* p. 56.

40 Cf. Scotus, Oxon., Ill, d.27, q.1, no. 13; IV, d.49, q.2, no. 19. St. Thomas says that, on the contrary, "if we make the impossible supposition that God were not man's good, He would not be man's reason for loving."

41 Cf. *De Trinitate,* Bk. Ill, a. I. Richard thought it possible to prove by this reasoning not only that there must be two persons in God but that there must be three, for it seemed to him that only then could divine love be absolutely pure and disinterested. St. Thomas disproves this theory by showing the inadequacy

The same idea is found in another form in Abelard's condemned theory of the necessity of creation. He says, in substance, that perfect love is manifestly a perfection of God and that, since love requires the duality of lover and beloved, God of necessity willed to create us and gave us existence.[42] St. Bernard combated this consequence, as he did Abelard's other errors.

Love of God in His great servants

True love of another, thus conceived as founded on the distinction of persons rather than on the notion of nature, seems in some way independent of our natural inclination; it even seems contrary to it, in a sense, for it draws us out of ourselves and, when intense, becomes violent, demanding in holy folly the sacrifice of all self-love.

In the *De diligendo Deo,*[i3] where St. Bernard formulates some principles which anticipate St. Thomas' doctrine, he shows that man, who begins by loving himself for his own sake, ought in heaven to come to love himself only for God's

of concepts derived from creatures to demonstrate the mystery of the Trinity. In the *Summa,* la, q.32, a.i, ad zum, he says: "When it is said that joyous possession of good requires partnership, this holds in the case of one not having perfect goodness: hence it needs to share some other's good in order to have the goodness of complete happiness." In addition to this error, Richard seems to have confused the essential love common to the three Persons of the Trinity with the notional love by which the Father and Son spirate the Holy Ghost.

i2 Theologia Christiana, Bk. V; *P.L.,* CLXXVIII, 1330: *"Necessario itaque Deus mundum esse voluit ac fecit."* In the *Summa,* la, q.19, a.3, St. Thomas refutes Abelard's error, saying: "But we do not necessarily will things without which the end is attainable, such as a horse for a journey which we can take on foot, for we can make the journey without one. The same applies to other means. Hence, since the goodness of God is perfect and can exist without other things inasmuch as no perfection can accrue to Him from them, it follows that His willing things apart from Himself is not absolutely necessary."

43 Chap. 15.

sake.[44] In his sermons on the Canticle of Canticles composed later, he speaks more explicitly, according to his own experience, of the violence of divine love triumphing over all that is other than itself. Not infrequently he writes, as in Sermon 79:

> O divine love, impetuous, vehement, burning, irresistible love, which allows no thought but of thee, scorning and despising all else besides, thou art thy own sufficiency. . . .
>
> How great love is . . . yet it has its degrees. The spouse has reached love's summit. The children love, too, but they are mindful of their inheritance and fear to lose it, and are more respectful and less loving. I am suspicious of that love which needs to be sustained by the hope of acquiring any other good. Love is feeble when its warmth and strength grow less with the loss of hope's support. Love is not pure when desiring anything else. Pure love is not mercenary, does not draw new strength from hope. The spouse loves purely; for by love alone is she all that she is; her every hope, her every good, is love alone.[45]

Massoulié should be consulted on this text.[46]

From this point of view more than any other, intense love, becoming violent, "wounds" him who loves and "makes him die to self" by making him live for another, by leading him to "go out of himself" and give himself generously to the beloved.[47] Intense love is, therefore, not without a certain

44 In this passage St. Bernard is speaking of the first manifestations of our natural tendency in the concrete rather than, as St. Thomas considers it, that natural tendency in its very essence. From the concrete point of view, St. Thomas agrees that hope disposes us for charity. Cf. la Ilae, q.62, a.4; q.27, a.3.

45 *Sermo LXXXIII in Cantica,* nos. 4, 5; *P.L.,* CLXXXin, 1183. See also *Sermo VIII,* no. 8.

46 Cf. *Traité de l'amour de Dieu,* Part II, chap. 14. We can accept it as certain that for St. Bernard perfect love implied a desire for union with God and in this sense sufficed; it made no sacrifice of eternal life, as we shall see later.

47 Rousselot thinks that any author who holds the ecstatic conception of love is

destruction of the lover, not without that interior immolation represented by exterior sacrifice and spoken of by the Scriptures. It implies a martyrdom of heart known to all the saints and a mystical death symbolized in the Gospel by the death of the grain of wheat that becomes the seed of new life. Happily, love causes this death, destroying all that is contrary to it. According to the words of *The Canticle,* "love is strong as death, jealousy as hard as hell."[48]

We are familiar with the enumeration of the ten degrees of charity, attributed to St. Bernard, commented on later in an opusculum published under St. Thomas' name,[49] and explained by St. John of the Cross in *The Darl{ Night of the Soul:* "Wise is the love of God, for it makes us dull to all else besides; it drives us to seek Him always and in all things, constrains us to work without rest and to endure without fatigue,[50] to desire Him eagerly, seek Him swiftly, dare for Him courageously, cleave to Him inseparably, and burn with loving for Him until, in heaven, He assimilates us wholly to Himself." [51]

In a treatise on charity compiled of texts from St. Bernard, Pierre de Blois, and Richard of St. Victor, we read: "Love takes no account of the impossible and in this reason praises and restrains not its eagerness. . . . Love's hunger is in-

blameworthy in proportion to his concern to sever all the bonds uniting love of another with our natural inclination toward our own proper good. Cf. *op. cit.,* p. 3. Father Rousselot elsewhere gives recognition to the fact that St. Bernard also held another, and corrective, tendency of thought, later developed by St. Thomas.

48 Opusc. 61.

49 Cf. *Opera S. Thomae* (Parm. ed., 1864), XVII, 254. *Opusc. de dilectione Dei et proximi,* chap. 38.

50 St. John of the Cross thinks this expression relates to the dark night of the soul, and the words *"languere utiliter"* to the dark night of the senses.

51 The Dark. Night of the Soul, Bk. II, chaps. 18-20. On this subject see Sermon LXXXV *in Cantica; P.L.,* CLXXXIII, 1157.

satiable. . . . Love itself is its own merit and its own reward. . . . In this world none of us can perfectly fulfill the precept to love God, but all of us should desire its perfect fulfillment." 62

Richard of St. Victor develops these ideas in his celebrated opusculum *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis:*

In the first degree, the soul is unable to resist its desire; in the second, it is continually preoccupied by it; in the third, it can take pleasure in nought else besides; in the fourth and last, it can no longer find any satisfaction for its desire. In other words, in the first degree love is invincible; in the second, possessive; in the third, exclusive; in the fourth, insatiable. . . . These four degrees of love differ according to whether it is a question of sentiment towards God or affection for men. In spiritual desires, the stronger the love, the better it is. In sensual desires, love degenerates as it grows and, because nothing can satiate mutual passion,53 at last becomes hate, a changeling that matches its former ardor by its present implacability, burning with desire while hating and never ceasing to hate even while loving.54

In human affections, only the first degree of love can be good; even the second is undoubtedly evil. But if, in human desires, the fourth degree of love is the worst of all, it is otherwise with our sentiment for God, since the last and greatest degree of love for Him is the best of all.55

Richard points out these four degrees of intense love of God in the Canticle of Canticles, the Psalms, and the Epistles

52 Cf. *P.L.,* CLXXXIV, 583 if.; CLXXXV, 1923 ff.; CXCV1, 1196.

68 When we make any creature our ultimate end we demand that it give us what God alone can give, and the transformation of love into hate that follows, St. Thomas would say, is evidence that our will has, as it were, an infinite capacity which God alone can fully satisfy and forever attract. Cf. la Hae, q. 10, a.2; q.5, a.4, 8.

54 Farther on Richard remarks that this reaction is an "image of damnation" when the soul hates God but is drawn to Him by its natural desire for happiness.

88 Cf. *P.L.,* CXCVI, 1213-15.

of St. Paul: "Even in the first degree, 'Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it'[56] for it is invincible. In the second degree, the soul puts its beloved 'as a seal upon its heart,'[57] for no longer can it cease thinking of him. In the third degree, 'If a man should give all the substance of his house for love, he shall despise it as nothing,'[58] for he no longer finds any enjoyment elsewhere. Finally, in the fourth degree, 'Love is strong as death; jealousy as hard as hell,'[59] for all that love does or endures for its God is as nothing."

Likewise in the Psalms, "In the first degree, love is invincible: 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength.'[60] In the second, it is inseparable: 'Let my tongue cleave to my jaws, if I do not remember thee.'[61] In the third, it is exclusive: 'My soul refused to be comforted: I remembered God and was delighted.'[62] In the fourth, love is insatiable: 'What shall I render to the Lord for all the diings that He hath rendered tome?' "[63]

Again in St. Paul, "In the first degree, love is invincible: 'Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation? or distress? or famine? or nakedness? or danger? or persecution? or tire sword?'[64] In the second degree, tire lover never loses sight of his love, no separation can part them: whence it is said, 'My soul hadi stuck close to Thee,'[65] for

88 Cant 8: 7.
57 *Ibid.,* v. 6.
68 *Ibid.,* v. 7.
89 *Ibid.,* v. 6.
80 Ps. 17: 2.
61 *Ibid.,* 136:6.
82 *Ibid.,* 76: 3-4.
83 *Ibid.,* 115: 12.
84 Rom. 8:35.
85 Ps. 62: 9.

nothing can tear it away. In the third degree, the soul counts all things as dung that it may gain Christ.[68] In the fourth, Christ is its life, and death for Him is gain,[67] for the lover of Christ desires to be dissolved and to be with Christ." [68]

In the four degrees of ardent charity thus enumerated by Richard we get a foreshadowing of St. Teresa's four inner mansions.[69] For these authors of the twelfth century, the vehemence and violence they hold characteristic of intense love exists even in uncreated love. They speak of God as being "overcome" by His love for us when He created us, and, still more, when He sent us His only Son and delivered Him up for our salvation.[70] Although writing with occasional brilliance on this subject, they do not seem to have made any real distinction between the metaphorical and the literal; they well knew, however, that God cannot properly be said to be "overcome" by anything whatever, even by His own love, since there can be no passivity in Him.

When they speak of "the spiritual wound of love," of "the destruction" worked in us by love of God, we encounter more difficulty in distinguishing between the metaphorical and the proper sense of their expressions. Their absolute manner of speaking about death to self, of mystical death, they shared in common with most theologians of their period. The latter had not yet distinguished explicitly enough between human nature considered in itself, in its essence, and fallen nature

«Phil. 3:8.

«7 Ibid., 1:21.

08 Ibid., i : 23.

00 Cf. Kulesza, *op. at.,* pp. 74-96. He is of the opinion that Richard's first degree of love *(amor insuperabilis)* corresponds to the prayer of quiet, his second degree *(amor inseparabilis)* to simple union, his third degree *(amor singularis, exclusions)* to ecstatic union, and his fourth *(amor insatiabilis)* to transforming union.

70 Cf. St. Bernard, *Cant.* 64, 10; *P.L.,* CI.XXXIII, 1088. Richard of St. Victor, *Tractatus de gradibus caritatis,* c. 1; *P.L.,* CXCVI, 1196.

corrupted by original sin and still wounded after baptism. They considered man as he is concretely and practically. Like the author of *The Imitation* 71 and unlike St. Thomas, they failed to study, in an abstract and speculative fashion, what essentially constitutes human nature, independently of the consequences of original and personal sin.

As a result, they came to assert more or less explicitly that the primordial tendency of our nature is a love tainted with egoism, love of our own good.72 The testimony of our first concrete psychological experiences, even as manifested in the baptized, evidently led them to think that, metaphysically speaking, the primordial inclination of the will's nature is toward self. For some of them, the will was, if not perverse, at least feeble, feebler than our intellect, since the intellect suffices to show us we ought to love God as the author of our nature more than ourselves.

Among these theologians are those who, like William of Auxerre and Alexander of Hales, attributed this weakness even to the natural will of the unfallen Adam and to the angelic wills as well, although in both these cases there clearly could be no question of original sin. They dared not say we are naturally inclined to love God more than ourselves, fearing to lean toward Pelagianism, which holds that grace

71 *The Imitation of Christ,* Bk. III, chap. 54. It would be difficult to find a better account of the condition in which we actually find ourselves, but we need to know as well the true state of our nature in its very essence as a work of God.

72 For a proof of this we have only to quote the text from St. Bernard referred to earlier: "Love is a natural affection, one of four. . . . It would therefore be just that what is natural should serve its own Author before all others. . . . But since nature is rather weak and feeble, it is impelled at the bidding of necessity to serve itself first. And there is carnal love by which before all other things man loves himself for his own sake. . . . And it is not imposed by a command but implanted in nature" *On the Love of God,* chap. 8, tr. Connolly (New York: Spiritual Book Associates, 1937), p. 37.

is necessary only to accomplish more easily what nature can do by itself.

They like to cite the classical texts of St. Augustine on the radical opposition between cupidity and charity, their favorite being: "Two loves have built two cities; the earthly city has for its principle love of self even unto contempt of God; and the heavenly city, love of God even unto contempt of self. One glories in itself; the other is glorified in the Lord." 73

We err, however, if we think that these theologians of the twelfth century prepared the way for the doctrine of Baius.74 For there is an immense difference between: (1) not distinguishing explicitly enough between nature and grace; and (2) formally denying, as Baius did,75 this essential distinction after it has been expressly formulated by great theologians.

Some theologians of the twelfth century certainly conceived of intense love of God as violent and even, one might say, as essentially violent or contrary to our natural appetite for our own good.76 We can understand then why, in treating of the order of charity, some maintained that, although we ought to help our parents more than we help others who are equally pleasing to God, we ought not to love them more.77 Intense

73 *The City of God,* Bk. XIV, chap. 28.

74 Cf. also St. Augustine, *Sermo* 31, *"De amore Dei et de amore saeculi."*

75 The theologians spoken *of* here certainly did not quote St. Augustine's texts as meaning what Baius took them to mean when he said: *"Omnis amor creaturae rationalis aut vitiosa est cupiditas, qua mundus diligitur, quae a foanne prohibetur, aut laudabilis illa caritas qua per Spiritum Sanctum in corde diffusa Deus amatur."* Denzinger, nos. 1038, 1034. However, they had not arrived at St. Thomas' exactness in this matter. Cf. Ia, q.60, a.5, ad sum; Ia IIae, q.84, a.1; Ia IIae, q.109, a.3.

78 Cf. Denzinger, no. 1034.

77 Cf. Guigo Carthusiensis, *Epistola ad Fratres de Monte Dei; P.L.,* CLXXXIV, 360. St. Thomas is of the opposite opinion: "The inclination of grace which is the effect of charity must needs be proportionate to those actions which have to be performed outwardly, so that, to wit, the affection of our charity be more intense

love of God becomes like a purifying and wholly consuming fire, insatiable, alleviated only by a certain destruction of the lover by his absorption into the beloved, by mystical death, die blessed effect of love. Some beautiful scriptural texts are to be understood in this sense: "Love is strong as death." [78] "He that shall lose his life for Me, shall find it." [79] "Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me." [80] "Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall live also together with Christ." [81] "For you are dead; and your life is hid widi Christ in God."[82]

Abelard strained the point and so erred in the direction Fénelon took later; but for St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor this blessed death most surely led to life.[83] They saw intense love as a holy folly surpassing reason, the folly of the Cross, the only efficacious remedy of that other folly called sin.[84] St. Paul's words must have deeply impressed these great contemplatives: "For the word of the cross to them indeed that perish is foolishness; but to them that are saved, that is, to us, it is the power of God. For it is written, 'I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; and the prudence of the prudent I will reject.' . . . For, seeing that in the wisdom of God, the world, by wisdom, knew not God, it pleased God, by the foolishness of our preaching, to save them that believe. For both Jews require signs; and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we

toward those to whom we ought to behave with greater kindness. . . . In matters pertaining to nature we should love our kindred most . . . on the battlefield, our fellow soldiers."

78 Cant. 8: 6.

70 Matt, io: 39.

80 II Cor. 12: 9.

81 Rom. 6: 8.

82 Col. 3:3.

88 Expositio in Ep. Pauli ad Rom., III, 7; *P.L.,* CLXXVHI, 891 fl.

84 Cf. St. Bernard, *Sermo* 29 *de diversis,* no. 3; *P.L.,* CLXXXIII, 621.

preach Christ crucified: unto the Jews indeed a stumbling-block, and unto the Gentiles foolishness; but unto them that are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and die wisdom of God. For the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men. . . . We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ. . . . We are reviled; and we bless. . . . We are blasphemed; and we entreat. We are made as the refuse of this world, the offscouring of all, even until now." [85]

Prompted by St. Paul's words, St. Bernard and Richard love to speak of the holy folly of love "which knows no measure, overcomes all distances, ignores every necessity, and triumphs over the opportune and the reasonable." [86]

Love alone the bond of union

These two twelfth-century masters of mysticism do not go so far as to require the sacrifice of our natural desire for personal beatitude; but they do insist on this, that in itself tire perfect love of charity is all-sufficient, even in the greatest aridity, for it unites us to God. "True love is its own happiness." [87] "O chaste and holy love! . . . O pure intention of the will! becoming more and more pure as it loses every admixture of self-interest, growing sweeter as it comes to experience only the divine. To love like this is to be made like to God." [88]

"Love itself is enough. . . . It is its own merit, its own reward; it needs no other motive, no other profit; is content to be and to grow. I love because I love, I love that I may love.

[85] 1 Cor. 1: 18-25; 4:10-13.
[86] Cf. St. Bernard, *Serm. in Cant.,* LXXIX, i; *P.L.,* CLXXXIII, 1163.
[87] St. Bernard, *On the Love of God,* chap. 7, no. 17; *P.L.,* CLXXXII, 984.
[88] *Ibid.,* chap. 10, no. 28.

. . . God Himself when He loves asks nothing but love in return . . . knowing that love is a lover's only happiness."[86]

Scripture contains some readily available support for this thought. According to the words of the Gospel, he who loves the Lord ardently is happy even in persecution: "Blessed are those who suffer persecution for justice' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."[90] Eternal life has begun in their hearts, for "he that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him."[91] "Charity . . . is the bond of perfection."[92] "Charity never falleth away"[93] . . . it is "the fulfilling of the law."[94] "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it."[95] As St. Augustine says, "Love God and do what you will";[96] for what you do will be good, if you love in truth. Before Pascal, St. Bernard wrote, "No one can seek Thee, Lord, without already having found Thee."[97]

Certainly love, even in the midst of persecution, and, in a sense, especially then, unites us to God and formally constitutes, as St. Thomas puts it, an "affective union" with God by making us desire the "real union" of the beatific vision.[98] St. Bernard, while not making this explicit distinction, never wearies of writing about affective union with God. After speaking of the love of God in the servants of His household, then in His children, he says of the spouse's love: "Her heart

[aB] *Serm.* LXXXIH *in Cant.* 4; PJL, CLXXXIII, 1183.

80 Matt. 51 to.

811 John 4: 16.

82 Col. 3: 14.

83 I Cor. 13: 8.

84 Rom. 13: 10; Matt *22:* 40.

85 Cant. 8: 7.

83 In I Ep. Ioann., 4, 8; *P.L.,* XXXV, 2033.

87 Actual grace leads the sinner to seek God and then, when he has charity, God is in him.

88 Ia IIae, q.28, a.i.

having been entirely purified, the spouse reaches a degree of love in which she desires and seeks God alone, asking nothing of God save God Himself, ... no longer desiring anything out of self-love," either her own happiness or glory, being drawn only towards God ... to cleave to Him and to enjoy Him." [100]

Quietists have made this quotation their own. Massoulié,[101] to reconcile the first part of it with the last and with other sayings of St. Bernard, makes this apt commentary: "Love must will to be united with the beloved. True, a soul in the transports and ardors of love does not actually think of the possession of this good under the aspect of its own good; but by simply following love's inclination it tends toward the beloved. However, this disposition cannot constitute a permanent state; it is composed only of particular acts which do not equal the full compass of the habit of charity; for, if we consider this virtue in its permanent state, the desire for the possession of God as the Sovereign Good belongs inseparably to it." [102]

St. Bernard was by no means speaking of the sacrifice of future beatitude. So little does he separate possession of God from love of God that for him, at least in this world and for such time as we lack the beatific vision, we possess God and are united to Him chiefly by love. Love is union, and both as union and as love it wills to endure and increase until death and to last on through all eternity, as St. Bernard would

99 This proposition can be reconciled with that which follows it only by insisting on the importance of this term.

190 Cf. *Sermo* VIII, *De diversis affectionibus animae,* 9; *P.L.,* CLXXXIII, 565.

101 Traité de l'amour de Dieu, Part II, chap. 14.

192 A supereminent act of charity that would be above hope lacks the fullness of the virtue of charity, which has as its secondary act love of self and desire of our own beatitude for God's sake, to glorify Him eternally.

never deny. In the texts quoted he simply made evident his recognition of the superiority of charity, as pure love of God, over hope.

Richard of St. Victor speaks in the same vein: "There is nothing better, nothing lovelier than charity. This, nature itself teaches us and experience daily testifies to us." 103 "God requires of us only our love. Charity is the fulfillment of the law; it contains the law and the prophets; because all that divine law commands or forbids can be reduced to love. If we pay Him the tribute of love, God is satisfied." 104 "O good God, to love You is to be fed by You . . . and the more You give us, the more our hunger grows ... for the more they are heaped upon us, the less do the good things of love satisfy our hearts. . . . *Implevit bonis.* . . . What are these good things of love? Things eye has not seen, ear has not heard, things that have not entered into the heart of man to conceive: the things God has prepared for those who love Him . . . the delights of eternity." 105

Forgetting, it would seem, what St. Augustine had written on the intellectual generation of the Word in God, Richard chose to consider the Blessed Trinity solely, as it were, from the point of view of love and thus he wandered from the path of tradition and encountered grave difficulties. During the thirteenth century, Scotus, too, manifested a tendency to place charity even above the beatific vision and adopted the position that, even in God, charity enjoys primacy. For Scotus, the happiness of heaven or the "possession of God" consists essen-

103 *"Nihil cantate melius, nihil caritate jucundius. Hoc nos docet ipsa natura, idem ipsum multiplex experientia." De Trinitate,* III, 2; *P.L.,* CXCVI, 916. It is open to question here whether Richard puts charity not only above faith and hope but even above the beatific vision.

104 *De gradibus caritatis,* chap. 3; *loc. cit., 1202.*

105 *Ibid.,* chap. 2; *loc. cit., 1200.*

tially and formally not in the beatific vision but in the "love of God seen face to face." 108

St. Bernard is silent on this point but, for the rest, the qualities Father Rousselot describes as characteristic of his conception of love seem properly ascribed to him: love draws us, not without violence, outside ourselves; it has its holy follies; and, in this world, it suffices to unite us to God. This being true, should we acknowledge that the views of St. Bernard and St. Thomas are as different as Father Rousselot thinks? Massoulié seems to have admitted that a search into St. Bernard's metaphors reveals, even if only obscurely, the principles clearly formulated later by the Angelic Doctor. We are inclined to agree with him, especially since Father Rousselot has forgotten to bring out a key point of St. Thomas' doctrine: that love, far from drawing what we love toward us, draws us toward what we love.107

100 Cf. Scotus, *In IV Sent.,* d.49, q.4. *"(Dicendum) beatitudinem essentialiter et formaliter consistere in actu voluntatis, quo simpliciter et solum attingitur bonum optimum aiius fruitione est natura beatificalibus perfecte beata."* St. Thomas thinks that he recognizes the truth in this position when he says (la Ilae, q.28, a.2) that mutual indwelling is an effect of love. For him, however, beatitude, or the possession of God, consists essentially in the immediate vision of God. Without this, love would constitute not real but only affective union, such as that existing between separated friends. For St. Thomas the blessed in heaven are united to God by an immediate apprehension of Him, a sort of intussusception that unites two into a oneness closer than food is assimilated into flesh, for it is the union of the knower with the known which—especially if the known is apprehended in an absolutely immediate way without any idea serving as an intermediary—is more intimate than the union of matter and form. Matter does not become form, but the knower becomes in one way *(intentionaliter)* the known and thus possesses it. Love in the form of desire precedes possession by immediate vision, while in the form of joy *(fruitio)* it comes after, flowing from it necessarily, like a property from an essence. Cf. la Ilae, q.3, a.4; q.28, a.I.

107 la, q. 16, a. I. Father Roland-Gosselin's remark that Rousselot has completely neglected the realism of love in St. Thomas' theory seems fully justified. Cf. his excellent article. "Le désir du bonheur et l'existence de Dieu," *Revue des Sciences philosophiques et théologiques* (April, 1924), p. 165. See too C. V. Heris, O.P., "L'amour naturel de Dieu," *Mélanges Thomistes* (Belgium: Bibliothèque Thomiste, I923)> PP· 289-310.

St. Thomas frequently states this principle, which is founded on the fact that the good, unlike to the true, is formally not in the mind but in the thing, as Aristotle aptly observed. By this principle St. Thomas establishes[108] that, although the intellect is superior to the will, which it directs, love of God is, in this world, better than knowledge of God, *"melior est amor Dei, quam cognitio!'* By the same principle, St. Thomas also explains[100] how love, especially the love of friendship, produces ecstasy, taking us out of self by drawing us toward the one we love, the more and more perfectly so when we love one not our equal but our superior. "We ought to love God," says St. Thomas, "in such a way that there is nothing in us not ordered to Him." [110] The case differs entirely when we love an inferior or an equal with the love of friendship. St. Thomas, following Dionysius, says that St. Paul was drawn out of himself by no longer living his own life but the life of Christ for the sake of Christ: "I live, now not I, but Christ liveth in me." [111]

All this is closely akin to St. Bernard's way of thinking. His idea, however, remains obscure on one important point. Although it certainly brings out the generosity and purity of love in God's great servants, it achieves far less success in showing the relationship between disinterested love and love of self, a seemingly indestructible inclination of our nature. So the second part of the problem of love, intimately bound up with the first, apparently remains unsolved and, to solve it, we must make a deeper study of the problem and the basic ideas it implies.

108 Ia, q. 82, a. 3.
108 Dionysius, *De divinis nominibus,* chap. 4, lect. 10.
110 Ibid., IIa Hac, q. 17, a. 6, ad 3um.
111 Gal. 2: 20.

ARTICLE III

st. thomas' view

St. Thomas was familiar with St. Bernard's ideas and with Richard's. We know this from what he has to say about the duality of persons required for the friendship of charity,[112] and the relationship of this infused virtue to the natural fundamental inclination of our will.[113] He gives evidence of this familiarity, too, when he touches on the question of the violence of love,[114] and of the foolishness of that preaching by which God has been pleased to save believers;[115] and, again, when he distinguishes between "affective union" formally constituted by love, even of persons separated by distance, and "real union," \yhich love desires but does not constitute.[116] Whoever meditates on this part of St. Thomas' doctrine can testify how profound are the metaphysics and theology of love to be found there.

Difficulties of the preceding view

The Angelic Doctor does not deny any of the characteristics of love mentioned in St. Bernard's works. He recognizes that love for God, especially when intense, draws us out of ourselves, not without violence; that it has its holy follies; and that, in this world, it, more than any other act, unites us

112 De potentia, q.8, a.9. See the answer to the second objection for a refutation of Richard's theory of the Trinity. *Ibid.,* 5 ob.; q. 10, a.4, ad 8um; q. 10, a.5, sed contra 3, 4, 8, and corp. art. and ad turn. Also IIa Ilae, q.25, a.4; la Ilae, q.28, a.3.

113 la Ilae, q.26, a.3; la, q.6o, a.5; la Dae, q. 109, a.3.

114 la Ilae, q.28, a.4 et 5.

115 Commentum in I Cor., I, 21 ff.; IIa Ilae, q.46, a. I, ad 2um.

113 la Ilae, q.28, a. 1, 2.

to God.[117] But how, he asks, can union with God bring us repose if love of Him has an essentially, and not merely accidentally, violent character? How can charity give joy and peace if it is not in conformity or in harmony with our deepest natural inclinations and aspirations? [118] This chief difficulty contains virtually all others relative to each of the characteristics of love remarked by St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor.

Love of friendship as such certainly makes us will good to another and brings us to love him for himself. St. Gregory certainly said that charity can exist only betwen distinct persons. Yet should we not love ourselves supernaturally ? Should we not, in charity, will life eternal for ourselves? It is said: "Thou shall love thy neighbor as thyself." [119] After God, the author of all natural and supernatural good, we apparently should then love ourselves. Apparently, too, we must desire our own participation in the divine good before we can desire to share that good in common with our neighbor. My unity, my identity, with myself is surely a closer bond than my union with anyone else. The subordination of each of us to the principle of order is prior to the coordination of all so subordinated. True love of another, even the most generous love of friendship, seems founded on natural likeness even more than on the distinction of persons. Every living creature loves its own kind, finding itself in some way in its counterparts. Why

117 Father Rousselot himself recognizes that "St. Thomas' theory is not a reaction against the medieval conception but an attempt to unify and clarify it." *Op. cit.,* PP· 43, 5° if- Compare St. Bernard's letter to the monks of Mont-Dieu (W~, CLXXXIV) with the *Summa,* Ia Ilae, q. 63, a. i, 2, 5; Ila Ilae, q.45.

118 Cf. Ia Ilae, q.28, a.2, 5; Ila Ilae, q.28, 29.

118 Matt. 22: 39.

should there not be a natural love of self that is legitimate? There is no apparent reason why such a love cannot rightly belong to the primordial inclination of our nature, if it is subordinated to a natural love of God as the author and preserver of our existence. St. Bernard and Richard failed to examine this point sufficiently, but St. Thomas probed it to its depths.[120] Undoubtedly, intense love of God is at times violent; sin, because it offends God and condemns souls to hell, inflicts keen suffering upon it. St. Thomas recognizes that our Lord, because of His profound knowledge of men's sins and their quasi-infinite gravity and, most of all, because of His great charity, suffered more during His passion than all contrite hearts put together.[121] The Angelic Doctor gives an excellent explanation of St. Paul's words about the folly of the Çross and the text, "love is strong as death, jealousy as harcf as hell," [122] from the Canticle of Canticles. Our crucifiedTLord has loved us with a love stronger than death, stronger than hell. The infinite value which His love drew from the person of the Word gave Him victory over sin, over Satan, and over death.

The holy violence of the Cross restored love's higher order and gave to mankind a wonderful remedy against those violations of the divine law which, if not forgiven in this world, incur the terrible punishment of eternal privation of God. But it need not follow that intense love possesses a character essentially violent or contrary to our nature. Certainly any disordered love of an apparent good runs counter to nature; but, just as surely, intense love of the truly good, and especially

120 Ila Ilae, q. 25, a. 4.
121 Cf. Illa, q.46, a. 6, ad 411m.1
222 Cant. 8: 6.

of God, follows nature's law. Intense love can, indeed, have reverberations on the human body that wear it out; but, no matter what its intensity, it seems to conform to our deepest natural inclinations and aspirations and to possess an essential connaturality. God created our nature. He gave it certain inclinations. Into these He, the source of all good, could inject no essential disorder. Anyone who fails to grasp this truth should seek light from St. Thomas.[188] Can we say with absolute truth that in this world love suffices to unite us with God and really constitutes our union with Him? Of course, it formally constitutes an affective union with Him, the kind of union existing between separated lovers. It certainly provides joy and peace, even in the midst of trials. But the question still remains: Does love formally constitute real union with God; or does it not rather drive us to desire that real and perfect union formally constituted by the immediate vision of the divine essence? [124]

In relation to this matter, St. Thomas introduces some nice and necessary distinctions. Most of the truth contained in the views about love's violence just discussed applies not only to the distinction of persons united by love but also, and particularly, to the consequences of original and personal sin, to egotism properly so called, and to the disorder it implies. We are to understand the holy folly of love in contrast to the wisdom of the world, a consequence of sin. And, if we compare it with right reason, we do so only to learn how far it surpasses, not how much it contradicts, reason. The idea so dear to St. Bernard and Richard fails signally to bring out the good in the very essence of our will's primordial inclina-

123 Ia IIae, q.28, a.5.
124 Ibid., a.1; *ibid.*, q.3, a.4.

tion, an inclination charity ought not to contradict but elevate.

The principle of St. Thomas' solution

These difficulties made St. Thomas formulate precisely certain views of Aristotle, pseudo-Dionysius, and St. Augustine on the fundamental inclination of our nature. They also led him to show the relationship between this inclination and grace, which should elevate it, not destroy it. In this way he came to discover some things but dimly glimpsed by theologians of the twelfth century.

St. Thomas differs from St. Bernard and from Richard, as well as from the author of *The Imitation,* in method rather than in doctrine. St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor keep to the concrete. And we must admit that, in the concrete, and even among the baptized, a disordered love of self or egotism properly so called is usually the prime psychological manifestation.[125] But truth demands a deeper study of human nature and requires us to consider the very essence of our nature's primordial inclination, taking our nature as it is in itself, abstractly, from the metaphysical point of view, as God conceived it from all eternity. Nominalists would pronounce such a study futile. We hold it of utmost importance, if men and angels really have determinate natures and if grace also has its essence, really distinct from all things in the merely natural order.

Aristotle observed that everything in nature is attracted to God, pure act, the immovable mover, the last end of the universe.[128] Certain writings circulated under die name of

125 Ia IIae, q. 109, a.3.

128 Sec *Metaphysics,* Bk. XII, chap. 7, and St. Thomas' commentary, lect. 7.

Dionysius[127] expressed the same thing in a variety of ways. St. Augustine, in his book *De natura bom,* clearly asserted in opposition to the Manichaeans that all nature as such, since God created it, is good; in some texts quoted by St. Bonaventure he even stated that all created nature, in a more or less confused way, tends toward the Supreme Good.[128] In his book *De diligendo Deo,* St. Bernard himself frequently alludes to this principle. Richard implicitly affirms it also.[129] And Holy Scripture expresses the same truth clearly in its own manner, were it only in the Canticle of the Three Children: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever."

St. Thomas, whose thought on the subject is notably in advance of St. Albert the Great's,[130] gave clear and definite formulation to these views by establishing, without leaning in the slightest way toward pantheism, that every created nature, especially when endowed with intellect and will, naturally tends to love God its author more than itself: just as in an organism each part naturally loves the whole more than itself.[131] No less clearly has die Angelic Doctor shown what an infinite distance lies between the natural love of God as the

127 *De divinis nominibus,* chap. 4, nos. 4, 10; chap, io, nos. 1, 10, 14, 16. St. Thomas frequently quotes from the fourth chapter the following sentence: *"Deus convertit omnia ad amorem sui ipsius,"* Cf. Ia llae, q. 109, a.3.

128 St. Augustine often says that man naturally desires happiness and that true happiness is found only in God: "Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our heart is restless until it rests in Thee." *Confessions,* I, 1. "Whoever learns to love himself, loves God." *De Trinitate,* 14, 14; *P.L.,* XL, 1051. Also *In foannem,* cxxiv, 21; P.L., XXXV, 1968.

123 Cf. *On the Love of God,* chaps. 2, 5, 7, 15.

180 In his *Summa theologica,* St. Albert the Great follows William of Auxerre in not daring to attribute to men and angels the natural capacity to love God more than themselves. Cf. II, q. 14, m.4, a. 2. In his *Summa de creaturis* he recognizes this power in them. Cf. I, tr.4, q.25.

131 la, q.6o, a.5; Ila llae, q.26, a.3.

author of nature and the supernatural love of God considered in His inner life and as the author of grace.[132] St. Thomas' clear teaching on this important point raises him above both Pelagian naturalism or Semi-pelagianism and what will later be called the pseudo-naturalism of Baius.[133]

The principle of St. Thomas' doctrine of love rests not merely on th^distinction of persons loving one another or the necessity of overcoming egotism's disorders but on our very nature itself, as fashioned by its Author. Therefore in regard to the order of charity, St. Thomas never neglects to consider our natural inclinations but shows how charity perfects them by elevating them to a higher order. The problem whether pure love ought to sacrifice the desire for personal beatitude does not really exist; for this desire, as it exists in the very essence of our nature's primordial inclination, is not disordered but, on the contrary, is initially subordinated to love of God.[134] Man possesses a natural inclination to virtue, weakened, indeed, by original and personal sin [135] but not

132 la, q.12, a.4, 5; q.62, a.2; IIa llae, q.5, a.5; q.62, a.1; q.109 per totam.

183 Thomists generally teach that, whereas in the state of perfect nature man would have needed only his natural endowments to be able to love God as the author of nature above all things, in the state of fallen nature he needs the help of grace *(gratia sanans)* to do so.

184 Although St. Bernard follows Aristotle less closely and shows less concern about the metaphysical aspect of the question, he and St. Thomas fully agree on this important point. He says of the soul created and preserved by God, particularly when raised to the order of grace, *"Melius est Deus ei quam ipsa sibi." III Sent,* d.29, q.2, c et ad 6um. Scotus disagrees with St. Thomas' statement in the *Summa* (IIa llae, q. 26, a. 13, ad 3um), that if, by an impossible supposition, God were not man's good, He would not be man's reason for loving. Scotus, *Oxon.,* III, d.27, q.1, no. 13; IV, d.49, q.2, no. 19, takes the opposite view that even if God were not our good, our final end, we could still love Him with a love which would have as its object neither our final end nor the means ordered to that end—an impossibility, in Thomistic opinion. Scotus' abstract theory fails to take into consideration the relationship between the good in itself, the loving subject, and his affective faculty. Cajetan refutes Scotus in lam q. 82, a.2, no. v ff. and in lam llae, q.1, a.6. See too the *Summa,* la, q.60, a.5, ad 2um.

130 la llae, q.85, a.1; q.109, a.3.

destroyed. Mortification and the Cross should remove every stain from this inclination, together with our natural desire for happiness. Purification, however, differs from destruction. Infused hope,[136] and charity even more, elevate our nature to a higher level, and we come to love our eternal happiness for God's sake, wishing to glorify Him eternally. The desire for happiness belongs essentially both to our nature and to the virtue of charity, which unites us to God and which, for the sake of God Himself, desires to continue united with Him forever.[137]

A closer study of St. Thomas' works reveals to us the nature of our initial love for our Creator, the character of our inclination to love Him more than self. St. Thomas' thought unfolds gradually, chronologically, and brings us step by step to a complete and satisfying solution of the questions raised by others.

In the second book of his *Commentary on the Sentences,*[138] he gives an excellent statement of the problem of love in the difficulties presented at the beginning. Every being seems inclined, he says, to seek what is good for itself *{bonum sibï),* or its own particular good, before everything else; for nature refers everything to self; only supernatural charity can make us love God more than self. Were the inclination to love God first and most mature's own, then wherever we find na-

is» \vc want bread, awning below us—*mihi et propter me*—subordinating it to ourselves; but by hope we desire God and the possession of God for ourselves yet for His own sake, as infinitely above us—*mihi sed non Jormaliter propter me.* Cf. Ha Ilae, q. 17, a. 5, and Cajetan, *ibid.*

13T St. Bonaventure teaches the same thing, saying (III, disc 27, q. 2) that the desire expressed by St. Paul to be dissolved and to be with Christ is a true act of charity and that *{III Sent.,* d.29, q.3 ad 6um), when he wishes to be ariathema, it is only for a time, conditionally, *"si optabile esset."*

128 Commentary on the Sentences, Bk. II, disc 3, q.3.

ture we should also find this tendency, even in the worst sinners, even in Satan.

In answer to this, St. Thomas first gives the opinion of William of Auxerre without, however, naming him. This thought is summarized elsewhere even more clearly as follows: "There have been some who maintained that an angel loves God more than himself with natural love, both as to the love of concupiscence, through his seeking the divine good for himself rather than his own good; and in a fashion with regard to the love of friendship, so far as he naturally desires a greater good for God than for himself; because he naturally wishes God to be God, while, as for himself, he wills to have his own nature. But absolutely speaking, out of natural love he loves himself more than he does God, because he naturally loves himself before God, and with greater intensity." 139

Even in his early works, St. Thomas judged William of Auxerre's opinion as improbable for the general reason that an angel's nature, as well as man's, is good in itself, fashioned to the image of God and, as a result, unmarked by any perverse inclination, such as love of self above love of God, the author of angelic life.140

A little later, when writing his *Commentary on Boo\ III of the Sentences^* he rejected William of Auxerre's opinion for a more exact reason, and his rejection contains the principle that now interests us, the genesis of which we are study-

189 Ia, q.6o, a. 5. Fear of falling into the Pelagian heresy more than any other reason led William of Auxerre to take the stand he did. He had not learned to distinguish between God as the author of nature and God considered in His intimate life and as the author of grace.

140 Cf. *U Sent.,* d.3, q.3.

141 III Sent., d.29, q. 1, a.3.

ing. It is expressed, however, with complex cleverness and has an air of effort about it quite foreign to the lofty simplicity of the *Summa theologica*. Although labored and extremely involved, the article can be resolved into two lines of reasoning: both men and angels prefer the good most suitable to them, the good most conformed to their appetites or desires, and they desire to preserve this good, especially where it exists perfectly and principally. But our good exists more perfectly in God than in ourselves, for it is in Him as in the first, universal, creative, and conserving cause of every good; in much the same way as the good of the part is more in the whole than in itself, for, as we know, a hand by itself, separated from the body, loses its life. So it follows that we all naturally delight in the good in God more than the good in ourselves. For example, we delight more in the existence, life, intellect, and goodness of the Author of our nature than in our own individual life, just as in tire body the hand's natural bent is to love the body more than itself, even, when necessary, to the point of sacrificing itself for the body.[142] Besides, as it is said in the same passage, the end ought to be loved more than the means; and God, even in the natural order, is tire end of all things, as He is, by His preservative act, more intimate to all than each is to itself.

In contradiction of William of Auxerre, St. Thomas further remarks: The natural love under consideration is not only a love of concupiscence but a love of benevolence as well, for we all naturally delight in the goodness in God our Creator, more than the goodness we find in ourselves,[143] naturally choosing the source of light and heat in preference to any of

«2 *ibid*,
ibid.

its rays. The love referred to here falls far short of infused charity, of course, yet it remains the normal consequence of the good bent God has given our very nature.

In the *Summa theologica,*[144] written at least ten years after the *Commentary on the Third Book, of the Sentences,* St. Thomas achieves a simpler and more perfect expression of the same principle and definitely discards the opinion of William of Auxerre as false. As we learn from his manuscripts, the Angelic Doctor usually perfected his line of reasoning not by amplification but by condensation. His progressive conciseness shows that his thought advances more by penetration than by extension. As is fitting in a contemplative, his thought rises toward the highest, simplest, and most universal principles and offers a human parallel to the hierarchy of angelic intellects. The higher angels grasp by a few ideas, in a single glance, and reduced to a sort of supra-sensible panorama or metaphysical view, a multitude of intelligible realities which the lower angels can achieve only by means of many less universal ideas.[145] So St. Thomas' thought progressed from the more complex development of his *Commentary* to the simplified exposition of the *Summa,*[146] wherein he rises above the sensible order and attains to a principle that throws light on the full compass of the problem of love.

A part of this text has been quoted elsewhere. The preceding discussion will now enable us to grasp more fully and deeply the meaning and implication of the whole.

The natural tendency of things devoid of reason shows the nature of the natural inclination residing in the will of an intellectual

144 Ia, q.60, a. 5.
145 Ibid., q.55, a. 3.
146 Ibid., q. 60, a. 5.

nature. Now, in the natural order of things, everything which of its nature belongs to another, is principally and more strongly inclined to that other to which it belongs, than toward itself. Such a natural tendency is evidenced from things which are moved to act according to nature: because whatever is moved of its nature to act in a certain manner, has the inborn aptitude for such action, as the Philosopher says (*Phys.,* ii). For we observe that the part naturally exposes itself to safeguard the whole; as, for instance, the hand is without deliberation exposed to the blow for the whole body's safety. And since reason copies nature, we find the same inclination among the social virtues; for it behooves the virtuous citizen to expose himself to the danger of death for the public weal of the state; and if man were a natural part of the city, then such inclination would be natural to him.

Consequently, since God is the universal good, and under this good both man and angel and every creature is comprised, because every creature in regard to its entire being naturally belongs to God; it follows that from natural love angel and man alike love God before themselves and with a greater love. Otherwise, if either of them loved self more than God, it would follow that natural love would be perverse, and that it would not be perfected but destroyed by charity.

In this beautiful text St. Thomas emphasizes the inner structure of his reasoning—major, minor, and conclusion—and takes up the consideration of God not only as the first efficient, creative, and conserving cause of our nature and existence but also as our last end and supreme good.

The order of agents corresponds to the order of ends: a principle properly and profitably invoked in relation to any being and therefore to any creature on any level. Even the lowliest beings, by tending toward their natural perfection, tend toward a certain likeness of the divine perfection, and toward

the good of the whole universe even more than their own.[147] This is true of the stone that tends toward the earth's center, of the earth that turns round the sun, of the sun that is drawn by a still greater force. It is true of plant and of animal: they naturally tend more toward the conservation of their species than to self-preservation. As our Lord said, "the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings" and will expose her own life, as St. Thomas remarks, to defend them from the hawk.[148] So all creation moves toward the good of the universe and toward God its author, a truth called to our minds by Aristotle and Dionysius and triumphantly proclaimed by the Old Testament: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord; praise and exalt Him above all forever." [140]

In commenting on this canticle, St. Bernard, Richard of St. Victor, St. Bonaventure, and St. Thomas all join in saying: "All ye works of the Lord, bless the Lord . . . angels of the Lord . . . , heavens . . . , waters that are above the heavens . . . , stars of heaven . . , shower and dew . . . , ice and snow . . . , light and darkness . . . , bless the Lord; mountains and hills . . . , seas and rivers . . . , birds of the air, bless the Lord; sons of men . . . , priests, servants of God . . . , spirits and souls of the just . . . , the holy and humble of heart, bless the Lord: praise and exalt Him above all forever . . . because He is good: because His mercy endureth forever and ever."

Chanted by the Church at daybreak, this lovely canticle of Lauds expresses with a magnificence full of praise, contemplation, and love the same principle St. Thomas cast into a meta-

147 Contra Gentes, Bk. III, chap. *24,* no. 3; *Summa,* Ia IIae, q. 109, a.3.
148 St. Thomas *In Matth.,* 23: 37.
140 Dan. 3: 57.

physical formula in his *Summa:* "In its own way everything loves God more than itself." 150

Elsewhere in his works St. Thomas has expressed the same great truth in approximately the same terms.151 In the *Summa* he makes more explicit the distinction between natural love of God and supernatural charity: "The good we receive from God is twofold, the good of nature and the good of grace. But the fellowship of natural goods bestowed on us by God is the foundation of natural love, in virtue of which not only man, so long as his nature remains unimpaired, loves God above all things and more than himself, but also every creature, each in its own way (that is, by an intellectual or rational or animal or at least natural love, as stones do, for instance, and other things bereft of knowledge), because each part naturally loves the common good of the whole more than its own particular good. This is evidenced by its operation, since the principal inclination of each part is toward common action conducive to the good of the whole. It may be seen also in civic virtues whereby sometimes the citizens suffer damage even to their own property and persons for the sake of the common good. Therefore much more is this realized with regard to the friendship of charity which is based on the fellowship of the gifts of grace.

"Therefore man ought, out of charity, to love God, who is the common good of all, more than himself: since happiness is in God as in the universal and fountain principle of all who are able to have a share of that happiness." 152

Duns Scotus has made the objection: "Even conceding that

150 Ia, q.60, a. 5.

151 Commentary on *De nom. div.,* chap. 4, lect. 9, 10; Quodlibet, I, q.4, a.3; Ia IIae, q. 109, a. 3.

152 IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3.

the part does expose itself for the whole, it acts thus only because of its identity with the whole and to save itself, for it can exist only in the whole. Besides, no creature is a part of God." 153 Is St. Thomas' doctrine, then, in danger of falling into pantheism?

Cajetan has answered this objection as follows:

> The reason why the part exposes itself for the whole is not because of its identity with it. The proof of which lies in this: that it will expose itself, if necessary, to the point of losing its identity that it may save the whole (as a hand will sacrifice itself for the body). The reason for this natural inclination is that given by St. Thomas: by its nature and very being the part is first and essentially for the whole and from the whole. This is fittingly applied to every creature in relation to God. Each is, according to its nature, a natural part of the universe and, as a result, naturally loves the universe more than itself. With far greater reason it naturally prefers to self the universal or essential good which as eminent or first cause contains the good of the whole universe.154

No pantheism lurks in this doctrine; for it maintains an infinite distance between God and the highest of creatures: God alone is existent by essence; He is Being itself; no creature is its own existence; every created essence is really distinct from its existence; God alone is essential goodness; every creature, no matter how great, is good only by participation.

Without at all approaching pantheism, we can say that God possesses goodness in its entirety, as the eminent cause in which every good is virtually contained. Angels and men do not love themselves as their last end. They love themselves as

153 *III Sent.*, dist. 27, q. i, a. 3.
154 *In Iam*, q. 60, a. 5.

creatures subordinated to a last end, God. They naturally love themselves for God, and so love God more than themselves.158

Solution of the problem

The principle that "every created nature tends to love its Author more than itself" has innumerable consequences. Only the principal ones will be noted. The first marks a certain hierarchy: the higher a nature is, the more perfect it is, and the stronger is its natural inclination to love God. The gravitating stone, the growing, seed-bearing plant, the living, breeding animal, the loving, thinking man, the matter-free and flesh-unfettered angel, all move in an ascending order of perfection toward the good of the universe. Thinking upon this, St. Thomas reached the conclusion that, at the moment of their creation, God gave to His angels grace in proportion to their natural capacity and the natural energy of their will.156

The principle now under discussion has another and no less remarkable consequence. The natural motion resulting from this inclination of all creatures becomes more and more rapid as it nears its fitting term, the natural end toward which they move and in which they come to rest. As any child knows who throws a ball into the air, movement that is violent or contrary to nature slows down progressively until it stops, whereas movement in conformity with nature, following her law of gravity, increases steadily in speed. So spirits gravitating toward God naturally (and connaturally by infused charity) advance toward Him more and more quickly as they come

155 Cf. Salmanticenses, *In Iam,* q.60, a.5. Also Gonet, *ibid.*
158 Cf. Ia, q.62, a.6.

closer to Him and are more drawn by Him, until they see Him face to face.157 The law here at work, to be seen later as manifest in the progress of the saints, is more general and therefore higher than Newton's law of gravity, which comes within its wider compass.

A third consequence of this principle results from its application to aSphere above matter, the spiritual order, and contains the solution to the problem of love. True spiritual goods coincide widi what is good in itself. By rightly desiring its own perfection, by loving itself as it ought, the created spirit loves its Creator still more; further, by ceasing to love its own perfection, it ceases to love God. Here, in plain opposition to quietism, St. Thomas proposes his solution to the problem of love, making no demand, under pretext of purifying our love for God, that we sacrifice our desire for perfection, virtue, sanctity, and salvation.158 Having made his expert deductions, he turns to the spiritual realm to find them verified in the natural and supernatural life of those pure spirits, the angels, and, in due proportion, in man's as well.

In the natural order conflict arises between two individuals of the same species because they desire the same material good, whetlier useful or pleasurable; for example, the same field, the same house, the same profits, things which cannot properly belong to them both at the same time. Between several spirits desiring the same spiritual good (for example, the same light of truth, the same virtue, the same beatitude) conflict is impossible. Why? St. Thomas gives the answer by putting into exact terms the profound thought of St. Augustine that includes a virtual solution of the social question.

157 Cf. St. Thomas, *In Epistolam ad Hebraeos,* X, 25; also la Ilae, q.35, a.6.
158 Cf. Denzinger, no. 1232.

Matter, by individualizing, divides. Material goods, because individualized and limited, cannot belong to all at the same time. On the contrary, spirit universalizes and can acquire immaterial goods which, because of their universality, can belong to all at the same time. These immaterial goods, far from dividing, unite us, if pride does not go seeking apparent goods and falsifying all things.[159] The true good of created spirits is identical with good in itself, with real good. Right reason's evaluation of a true good is independent of any individual pleasure or particular utility resulting from its possession. It recognizes, for example, that to tell the truth and refrain from lying is good even though it should cost life itself. There can be no question of sacrificing a spiritual good, because by efficaciously loving it and ourselves through it we love God our Sovereign Good more than self. By ceasing to love it, we turn from God.[160]

St. Thomas has examined this consequence with particular thoroughness in his treatise on the angels. His thought may be summarized as follows: Even in the order of animal life, when "the hen gathers her chickens under her wings" to defend them from the hawk, she naturally loves the good of her species, and her motherhood more than her individual life, more than her own good, which she will sacrifice if need be. No parallel obtains in regard to any goods proper to the soul, such as virtue or spiritual perfection. And because no such parallel exists, the propositions of Molinos and Fénelon

[159] *Summa,* Illa, q.23, a.i, ad 311m; la Ilac, q.28, a.5, ad 2um; *Tabula aurca S. Thomae: Bonum,* no. 227.

[160] a virtuous man loves the good of virtue more because it is good in itself than because it perfects him and is good for him; in fact, the formal reason for this good becoming a perfection for him is that it is good in itself and lovable as an end having intrinsic value. See St. Thomas' *Commentary on Aristotle't Ethics,* Bk. IX, chap. 8, lect. 9; also la, q.6o, a.5, ad 2um; Ha Ilac, q.26, a.3, ad 2um.

declaring that the truly interior soul should not desire its own perfection, have been condemned.[161]

St. Thomas points out the profound reason why the quietist view is wrong when he shows how the proper perfection of created spirits coincides with what is good in itself and ultimately with the Sovereign Good. He remarks it again when he reasons that the angels could not have sinned directly against the natural law, which was absolutely evident to them, but must have done so indirectly by turning away from the supernatural law known to them only in the obscurity of faith.

If the multiplicity of individuals of the same species actually proceeds from matter which receives the same specific form many times—as wax receives the imprint of a seal over and over again—and if, in consequence, each pure spirit, being without matter, is the only one of his species,[162] then no spirit could suffer inner conflict because of opposition between the good of his species and his individual good. Furthermore, as each pure spirit always intuitively sees his own essence and the natural law imprinted therein, he cannot be deceived in regard to the law, nor can he cease to consider the law. The voluntary disorder of sin always presupposes some error of practical judgment or at least a certain failure to consider the law when it could and should be considered. It follows, according to St. Thomas, that the angels could never sin directly against the natural law, which is absolutely evident to them. As has been remarked, the nature of each draws him to love God more than himself and, as a result, to observe

181 Cf. Denzinger, no. 1232, for Molinos' proposition, the same error later repeated by Fénelon in a less exaggerated form. Cf. Denzinger, nos. 1344, 1345.

182 Cf. Ia, q.50, a.4.

the whole natural law as seen written in his own essence. So he sees intuitively that his own true good as a pure spirit coincides with that which is good in itself; and by loving it he loves yet more the Sovereign Source of all good. Although one of the greatest corollaries of the principle formulated above, this truth has not always been understood by modern theologians despite St. Thomas' full and satisfying explanation of it. The fact is that not only could the angels sin indirectly against the natural law, but many of them actually did. How? Before receiving the immediate vision of the divine essence, they knew the supernatural law only in the obscurity of faith; so they could sin against it, particularly through pride. As a result they could also sin indirectly against the natural law, which obliges them to obey God in whatever He commands eidier in the natural or in the supernatural order.[163]

By sinning, the devil stopped loving God directly as author of grace; consequently he stopped loving God indirectly as the author of the natural moral law. He no longer loves himself rightly, no longer loves his own true good, pride making him seek it where it is not to be found. While hating his just Judge and the punishment inflicted by Him, he keeps on loving life itself and, in a wholly natural, physical, and in no way moral or supernatural sense, and in despite of everything, he keeps on loving the Author of nature and of life.[104]

The consequence of the principle appealed to above does not apply to man exactly in the same way. However, so far as man is a spirit, the good proper to his higher part coincides with the good in itself as willed by God; and, by loving himself according to the higher part of his nature, man loves his

103 Cf. St. Thomas, *De malo,* q.16, a.3; *Summa.* la, q.63, a.i, ad 311m.
164 la, q.6o, a.5, ad sum.

Creator still more. Not to so love himself would be to turn from God.

In this respect man differs from the angels because his intellect is the last and least of intellects, and its proper object is the lowest of intelligibles and lies in the shadow of sensible things; yet in the mirror of material things he can know purely spiritual realities. His intellect cannot see the very essence of his own soul intuitively or the natural law written there. Moreover, through his imagination, which does not always follow reason, sensible things exert an attraction upon him and provoke his emotions to disorder. These in turn influence his judgment and lead him into error, especially in practical matters. Consequently they lead to sin, even to sins directly opposed to the natural law. Besides, since no man comprises the whole of his species but each is only one among many, conflict can exist between the good of the species and the sensible good of the individual; and only too often man sins by preferring his personal good, whether useful or pleasurable, and sometimes comes at last to sin even against nature itself.[168]

However, in man too, spiritual good and essential good are at one, according to the words of Psalm 10: "He that loveth iniquity hateth his own soul." From the lips of Christ Himself we hear: "He that shall lose his life for Me shall find ·(. '› 166

Aristotle presented the same truth from a philosophical point of view in his *Ethics:*

The question is also debated, whether a man should love himself most, or someone else. People criticize those who love themselves

185 Cf. Ila Ilae, q. 154, a. 12.
168 Matt, to: 39.

most, and call them self-lovers, using this as an epithet of disgrace. . . . But the facts clash with these arguments, and this is not surprising. For men say that one ought to love best one's best friend, and a man's best friend is one who wishes well to the object of his wish for his sake, even if no one is to know of it; and these attributes are found most of all in a man's attitude toward himself. . . .

Perhaps we ought to mark off such arguments from each other and determine how far and in what respects each view is right. Now if we grasp the sense in which each school uses the phrase "lover of self," the truth may become evident. Those who use the term as one of reproach ascribe self-love to people who assign to themselves the greater share of wealth, honours, and bodily pleasures; for these are what most people desire. . . . So those who are grasping with regard to these things gratify their appetites and in general their feelings and the irrational element of the soul; and most men are of this nature (which is the reason why the epithet has come to be used as it is—it takes its meaning from the prevailing type of self-love, which is a bad one); it is just, therefore, that men who are lovers of self in this way are reproached for being so. That it is those who give themselves the preference in regard to objects of this sort that most people usually call lovers of self is plain; for if a man were always anxious that he himself, above all things, should act justly, temperately, or in accordance with any other of the virtues, and in general were always to try to secure for himself the honourable course, no one will call such a man a lover of self or blame him.

But such a man would seem more than the other a lover of self; at all events he assigns to himself the things that are noblest and best, and gratifies the most authoritative element in himself and in all things obeys this; and just as a city or any other systematic whole is most properly identified with the most authoritative element in it, so is a man; and therefore the man who loves this and gratifies it is most of all a lover of self. . . . Whence it follows that he is most truly a lover of self, of another type than that which is a

matter of reproach, and as different from that as living according to a rational principle is from living as passion dictates, and desiring what is noble from desiring what seems advantageous. . . .

For he will throw away both wealth and honours and in general the goods that are objects of competition, gaining for himself nobility; since he would prefer a short period of intense pleasure to a long one of mild enjoyment, a twelve-month of noble life to many years of humdrum existence, and one great and noble action to many trivial ones. Now those who die for others doubtless attain this result; it is therefore a great prize that they choose for themselves. They will throw away wealth too on condition that their friends will gain more; for while a man's friend gains wealth he himself achieves nobility; he is therefore assigning the greater good to himself. The same too is true of honour and office; all these things he will sacrifice to his friend; for this is noble and laudable for himself. Rightly then is he thought to be good, since he chooses nobility before all else. But he may even give up actions to his friend; it may be nobler to become the cause of his friend's acting than to act himself. . . . In this sense, then, as has been said, a man should be a lover of self; but in the sense in which most men are so, he ought not.[167]

Both when treating of magnanimity or greatness of soul[168] and when inquiring whether sinners truly love themselves,[169] St. Thomas carefully examines Aristotle's noble thought in the light of the Gospel, remarking:

For it is common to all for each one to love what he thinks himself to be. . . . In this way too, all men, both good and wicked, love themselves, in so far as they love their own preservation.

107 Probably in Bk. IX, chap. 8, of his *Ethics,* Aristotle set out to refute Plato's error on the same subject in his *Laws,* Bk. V., thinking that a distinction based on the exact observation of nature was necessary to offset his teacher's absolute condemnation of all love of self.

les Ila Ilae, q. 129, a. 1, 2, etc.

169 Ibid., q.25, a. 7.

Secondly, a man is said to be something in respect of some predominance, as the sovereign of a state is spoken of as being the state, and so, what the sovereign does, the state is said to do. In this way, all do not think themselves to be what they are. For the reasoning mind is the predominant part of man, while the sensitive and corporeal nature takes the second place, the former of which the Apostle calls the *inward man,* and the latter, the *outward man* (II Cor. 4:16). Now the good look upon their rational nature or the inward man as being the chief thing in them, wherefore in this way they think themselves to be what they are. On the other hand, the wicked reckon their sensitive and corporeal nature, or the outward man, to hold the first place. Wherefore, since they know not themselves aright, they do not love themselves aright, but love what they think themselves to be. But the good know themselves truly, and therefore truly love themselves. . . .

In this way the good love themselves, as to the inward man, because they wish the preservation thereof in its integrity, they desire good things for him, namely spiritual goods, indeed they do their best to obtain them, and they take pleasure in entering into their own hearts, because they find there good thoughts in the present, the memory of past good, and the hope of future good, all of which are sources of pleasure. Likewise they experience no clashing of wills, since their whole soul tends to one thing.

On the other hand, the wicked have no wish to be preserved in the integrity of the inward man, nor do they desire spiritual goods for him, nor do they work for that end, nor do they take pleasure in their own company by entering into their own hearts, because whatever they find there, present, past and future, is evil and horrible; nor do they agree with themselves, on account of the gnawings of conscience. . . .

In the same manner it may be shown that the wicked love themselves, as regards the corruption of the outward man, whereas the good do not love themselves thus.

The love of self which is the principle of sin is that which is proper to the wicked, and reaches *to the contempt of God, . . .* because the wicked so desire external goods as to despise spiritual goods.

The wicked have some share of self-love, in so far as they think themselves good. Yet such love of self is not true but apparent: and even this is not possible in those who are very wicked." 170

The damned, in fact, hate themselves and, in a sense, will their own annihilation that they may escape suffering.

Everything we have been considering drives home to us the fact that spiritual creatures love God by perfectly loving themselves and turn from God by failing to love themselves as they should; for, though men can love money, sensual pleasures, and honors too much, no one can, contrary to quietist teaching, love virtue too much.171 To love virtue is to love our best self, and to love our best self is to love the best of all goods, God Himself.

Truths found in St. Augustine, St. Bernard, and Richard, but emphasized and synthesized by St. Thomas, have formed this simple solution of a great problem.172 Father Rousselot may have forgotten to note that love, contrary to knowledge, draws us toward reality instead of bringing reality to us, but he has thoroughly grasped St. Thomas' solution. He writes: "St. Thomas thus reconciles two apparently contradictory statements: (1) that disinterested love is possible and even profoundly natural (since man's nature leads him to love God more than self): (2) that purely 'ecstatic' love, a love of

170 Cf. Ia Ilae, q.29, a.5, et Suppl., q.98, a.3.

171 Quaest. disp. de caritate, A.7, ad 1311m; *De perfectione vitae spiritualis,* c. 15.

172 Cf. St. Augustine, *De Trinitate,* Bk. XIV, 14 *(P.L.,* XLII, 1050); *in Tract, in Joan.,* CXXIV, 21 *(P.L.,* XXXV, 1968); St. Bernard, *De diligendo Deo, 2 (P.L.,* CLXXXII, 978); Richard of St. Victor, *De gradibus earitatis,* 4 *(P.L.,* CXCVI, 1206).

'pure duality,' is impossible." 173 As a matter of fact, a love that would take us entirely out of ourselves, so to speak, would not at all conform to our nature's basic inclination toward good, and especially our own good as properly subordinated to the supreme and incomparable Good.

Putting this problem into words, we ask ourselves: Can man love God with a really pure and truly disinterested love? And, if he can, how reconcile this love with self-love, commonly and correctly recognized as fundamental to his nature? Apparently man can love God only as his own particular good; for him to love God in any other way would conflict with his nature and is, therefore, impossible.

St. Thomas' answer is to distinguish between the end and the subject of love. Regarding the end, he declares that our nature leads us to love God not for ourselves, as subordinating Him to us, but for Himself and more than ourselves, as our first cause and last end. At the same time, concerning the nature of our love for God, he admits that none of us could love Him were we not dependent on that good which is Himself.174 In other words, if our faculty for loving had no relation to God, we surely could not love Him; but such a relationship exists, is absolutely fundamental, and pertains to our first cause and last end.

Man's existence, personal unity, and goodness depend entirely upon God, his creator and conserver. In this single fact the following two truths find reconciliation: (i) a man really loves himself only when he loves God still more and, therefore, with a pure and disinterested love; and (2) no man

173 Rousselot, *op. cit.,* p. 14.

174Ia, q.6o, a.5, ad aum; IIa IIae, q.26, a. 13, ad 3um. As remarked earlier, Scotus is far from agreement with St. Thomas on this point. Cf. also *III Sent.,* d. 29, q. I, a.3, ad 211m.

can love God without loving himself in God, as the *Canticle of Canticles* expresses it, "My beloved to me, and I to Him." 175

The disciple speaks to the Master, saying: "I abandon myself and lose myself that I may find Thee; yet I know that nothing is lost to him who finds the treasure of Thy heart, where love is disinterested and faithful and makes us hunger to reproduce it in our own hearts." 176

"He that shall lose his life for Me shall find it." When St. Bernard and Richard of St. Victor make use of this passage for the purpose of exhorting the faithful, they emphasize the first part of our Savior's words; but obviously, like St. Thomas, they accept the second. The same cannot be said of the quietists.

Much more clearly than either St. Bernard or Richard, the Angelic Doctor has perceived that by loving God and neighbor disinterestedly man's free will does not play the rebel against nature, as though his nature could not rise above the selfish love of concupiscence. Admittedly, original sin has weakened his natural inclination to virtue,177 but, together with every creature, he still holds to his original bent to love God more than his particular good and even to love himself for God. Grace perfects and uplifts this inclination without destroying it, without demanding the sacrifice of his desire for perfection and happiness, a desire initially good and one essentially subordinated to love of God and therefore never to be sacrificed.

A further consequence of St. Thomas' principle relates to love of neighbor and can be stated thus: According to his spiritual nature, man ought to love himself less than God and

176 Cant. 2: 16.

176 Prayer of consecration to the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus.

177 la IIae, q. 109, a.3.

more than his neighbor; to do so is neither egoism nor inordinate love of self—even should his neighbor be better than he.

St. Thomas gives the reason for this when he says: "A man is not a friend to himself, but something more than a friend, since friendship implies union, for . . . love is a unitive force, whereas a man is one with himself, which is more than being united to another. Hence, just as unity is the principle of union, so the love with which a man loves himself is the form and root of friendship." [178] A friend is another self, and so Holy Scripture admonishes us, "Thou shalt love thy friend as thyself," [179] bidding us, in other words, to will for our friend the same good things we will for ourselves. Love of neighbor rises no higher than the level of concupiscence if founded on mutual pleasure-seeking; it becomes true friendship only when based on the common quest for goodness, when friend wants for friend what he himself most desires.[180] To this, St. Thomas adds: "Just as unity surpasses union, the fact that man himself has a share of the divine good is a more potent reason for loving than that another should be a partner with him in that share. Therefore man, out of charity, ought to love himself more than his neighbor," [181] at least according to his higher part.

The objection may be made that, as the poet expresses it, "we needs must love the highest when we see it," and my neighbor is often a better man than I. To this St. Thomas [182] replies that we must love those who are better than ourselves

178 IIa IIae, q. 25, a. 4.
178 Lev. 19: 18.
180 Cf. St. Thomas *In Ethicam*, Bk. VIII, chap. 2, lect. 3.
181 IIa IIae, q.26, a. 4.
182 Ibid., ad turn.

by desiring for them their merited and greater reward; on the other hand, no other human being is so close to us as we are to ourselves; God, and God alone, is more intimately present. Every just man, then, prizes the charity uniting him to God more than the charity of any other just man. A child loves its own poor and far from faultless mother much more than some one else's who may be rich and virtuous; and would rather wear, as St. Augustine observes, its own clothes than some one else's richer and finer garments.

Undoubtedly saints have laid down their lives for others; yet, even in dying they love themselves more, according to the higher part of their souls, than those for whom they die, St. Thomas says,[183] for never may they sacrifice their own spiritual good to free another from sin. The good of our country can indeed demand the sacrifice of a man's life, but not of his spiritual good; it cannot require him to sin or lose his virtue. If, considered in this matter (the principle of individualization), an individual is subordinate to the state, the latter is subordinate to the human person as having a spiritual and immortal soul in immediate relation with God.[184]

183 Ibid., ad 2um.

184 Individuality and personality must not be confused. Individuation, even in our Savior's humanity, proceeds from matter; personality makes us capable of existing in ourselves, of acting for ourselves, of being *sui juris.* In Christ, His personality is the uncreated personality of die Word.

For the subordination of the individual to social authority, sec la llae, q. 96, a. 4. St. Thomas tells us that just human laws bind in conscience. For the superiority of the person over human laws, see *ibid.,* where St. Thomas continues by saying that unjust laws do not bind in conscience and, if they are contrary to religion and, for example, induce us to practice idolatry, they must be disobeyed, even if such disobedience leads to martyrdom. Cf. also IIa llae, q.104, a.5, ad aum; men are not obliged to obey their superiors in all things; for in certain things they are directly subject to God, who instructs them by the natural law or the written law.

After this enumeration of the chief consequences of the principle that every creature's natural bent is to love God the Creator first and most, an examination of the difficulties that may be raised concerning the principle itself will give us a deeper understanding of it and reveal to us, by the way, other conclusions flowing from the same principle and sounding the fully harmony of nature and grace as realized in the unitive life on earth and the life of glory in heaven.

Confirmation of the Thomistic solution of the problem of love

As stated in the *Summa* (Ia, q. 60, a. 5; IIa IIae, q. 26, a. 3), these difficulties have reference to the end of our primordial natural inclination and to its relations, on one hand, with infused charity and, on the other, with sin and reparation.

One objection contends that natural love is founded on natural union; and that our nature, being separated by its own inferiority from the divine, can have no natural attraction drawing it to love God more than itself. St. Thomas answers by agreeing that natural love is based on natural union, pointing this out as the reason why a man loves himself more than his neighbor with whom he can have, at most, union, whereas with himself he enjoys true unity. The Angelic Doctor goes on to drive home the truth that this unity of a man with himself necessarily depends, in turn, upon God, the creator and conserver of man's nature, the whole reason or total cause of his existence and participated goodness. To Him man's affection naturally first turns. In any species, the individual loves the good of the species more than its own individual good, as observation of the way mothers defend their young will teach us. God is not merely the good of the human species,

He is the absolutely universal and essential good. Our love turns towards him first. The proximate cause of this natural inclination is our own nature; its ultimate cause is God.[186]

The end of our primordial natural inclination

At this point, let us return to the difficulty expressed in the statement of the problems: All that we love we love as our own good; now we love whatever is the reason for love more than the object of love, just as we know principles better than conclusions; man, therefore, loves himself more than any odier good whatever, even the Supreme Good.

Now the meaning and implication of St. Thomas' distinction between the end of love and the loving subject, whose good it is to love God more than self, becomes clearer to us. "When it is said that God is loved by an angel *in so far* as He is good to the angel, if the expression *in so far* denotes an end, then it is false; for he does not naturally love God for his own good, but for God's own sake. If it denotes the nature of love on the part of the one loving, then it is true; for it would not be in the nature of anyone to love God, except from this, that everything is dependent on that good which is God." [186]

Does not a man wish his friend well even when it will mean no personal advantage for himself? With how much greater reason ought he not to love God in the same way?[187] "The part does indeed love the good of the whole, as becomes a part, not however so as to refer the good of the whole to itself, but rather itself to the good of the whole." [188]

188 Cf. la, q.6o, a.5, ad mm; Ila Ilae, q.a6, a.3, ad mm.
180 la, q.6o, a.5, ad aum; Ila Ilae, q.a6, a. 13, ad 311m.
187 St. Thomas, *III Sent.,* d.29, q. 1, a.3, ad aum.
188 Ila Ilae, q.a6, a.3, ad aum.

To love is to will good to another. If we will good to ourselves, this good can be either inferior or superior to us. If, like our daily food, it is inferior to us, we will it to ourselves and for ourselves, subordinating it to us as to an end. If it is superior to us, we should will it to ourselves but not for ourselves; far from subordinating it to us, we should subordinate ourselves to it, as is done in that higher love of concupiscence called hope, especially when this virtue is united to charity. By charity we will to God His glory and to ourselves our own salvation that we may glorify God eternally. These two forms of supernatural love of God, far from being contrary to our nature, are perfectly conformed to it, His handiwork.189

The following division of love into its various kinds is based on St. Thomas' note: "To love is to wish good to someone. Hence the movement of love has a twofold tendency: toward the good which a man wishes to someone (to himself or to another) and toward that to which he wishes some good. Accordingly man has love of concupiscence toward the good that he wishes to another, and love of friendship toward him to whom he wishes good."190

In the natural order, every creature is naturally inclined to love its own good for the common good of the universe and, in a more or less obscure fashion, to manifest die goodness of the Creator whose might is the source and support of the universe.191

The two preceding difficulties about the basis and end of nature's primordial inclination can be combined into one: Nature's acts are all fundamentally self-centered: the way

188 la Ilae, q.26, a.4.

180 Ibid. For the divisions of love, see Ha Hae, q.17, a.5, 8, and Cajetan's commentary; also q.23, a.i; q.25, a.4; q.27, a.2, 3.

181 Ia Hae, q.109, a.3; *Contra Gentes,* Bk. Ill, chap. 24.

	In the order of grace: charity	I will the glory of God, the author of grace.
		I will my own salvation that I may glorify God eternally.
	In tine order of nature	I will the glory of God, the author of my nature, in which He manifests His goodness.
	In the order of grace -	Hope enlivened by charity; I efficaciously desire that God be loved more than myself.
Love' Of God'		Hope without charity: I inefficaciously desire that God be loved more than myself.
a	In the order of nature.	I desire God by subordinating myself to Him, as to that which is good for me, but which I desire ultimately, for His own sake, not for mine.
	Of inferior things	I desire food as a good to be obtained for myself, subordinating it to my life, as to an end.

creatures act for their own self-preservation reveals this to us. Nature, then, inclines no creature to love God more than itself.[192] St. Thomas concedes this to be true of fallen nature which, because of original sin and its consequences, certainly does tend toward egoism.[193] He denies it to be true of nature as it came from the hand of God. "Nature's operation is self-centered not merely with regard to certain particular details, but much more with regard to what is common; for everything is inclined to preserve not merely its individuality, but likewise its species. And much more has everything a natural inclination toward what is the absolutely universal good." [194]

When this objection persists, maintaing that love of God is really a desire to enjoy Him and therefore remains nothing but self-love whereby we desire good for ourselves, St. Thomas replies: "That a man wishes to enjoy God pertains to that love of God which is love of concupiscence. But we love God with the love of friendship more than with the love of concupiscence, because the divine good is greater in itself than our share of good in enjoying Him." [195] Another observation of his bearing on this subject really composes a theological commentary on the expression of the Canticle of Canticles, "My beloved to me, and I to him." "Hope makes us tend to God, as to a good to be obtained finally, and as to a helper strong to assist: whereas charity, properly speaking, makes us tend to God, by uniting our affections to Him, so that we live, not

192 Ia, q. 6o, a.5, 3 ob.

193 Ia IIae, q.109, a.3; *ibid.,* q.85, a.i. Cf. the index to St. Bernard's works for the word *curvitas* to find those passages where the saint speaks of our downbent souls that God created upright. The author of *The Imitation* has the same thing to say, Bk. III, chap. 54.

194 Ia, q. 60, a. 5, ad 3um; *II Sent.,* d.3, q.3, ad 2um; *Quodlibet,* I, a. 8, ad sum.

195IIa IIae, q.26, a.3, ad 3um; a.4, ad 3um.

for ourselves, but for God." 196 This supernatural inclination of charity, far from being contrary to our natural desire for happiness, is conformed to it; charity's pure love could not, as a result, require us to sacrifice this desire but raises it to a new height in us by making us will our salvation chiefly that we may glorify God eternally.

Nature and charity

William of Auxerre held that anyone maintaining that an angel can, without grace, love God more than himself, practically asserts that he can, without grace, live a just and holy life; but to maintain this view is to fall into the Pelagian heresy.197 In fact, he continues, quoting St. Augustine 198 as his authority, the words of St. Paul, "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost who is given to us," apply to angels as well as to men.

St. Thomas does not subtract anything from St. Augustine's meaning; rather he gives it greater clarity by replying: "God, in so far as He is the universal good, on whom every natural good depends, is loved by everything with natural love. So far as He is the good which of its very nature, beatifies all with supernatural beatitude, He is loved with the love of charity." 199 This is the distinction between God, the author of nature (regarded as outside God), and God in His intimate life (that is, as the author of grace). This distinction was always taught by the Church and explicitly formulated in the condemnation of Baius.200 Grace and charity belong to the

186 Ha Ilae, q. 17, a. 6, ad 311m.
187 Summa, Bk. II, tr. I, chap. 4.
788 The City of God, Bk. XII, chap. 9.
188 la, q.6o, a.5, ad 411m; la, q.12, a.4; *III Sent.,* d.29, q.i.
800 Denzingcr, no. 1034.

same order as the beatific vision; they are indeed the seed of the state of glory. Neither man nor angel can, solely by natural intellectual power, see God directly; they can apprehend Him naturally only through the reflection of His perfections—man in the mirror of sensible things, angels in the mirror of His own essence.[201]

Without stating it as clearly as St. Thomas does, St. Augustine had formulated this distinction, not only in regard to men but also in regard to the angels, for he says:

> Who gave them good will, if not He who created them with good will and a chaste love whereby to cleave to Him, who produced their natures and gave them grace by one and the same act? We believe that the good angels never were without good will or love of God. As to the bad angels, they were created good but became bad by their own will, itself made evil not by its own good nature but by its defection from the good; for evil springs not from goodness but from defection from goodness. The angels who fell either received less of the grace of divine love than those who persevered or, all having been created in equal goodness, they fell by their own evil will while the others were more strongly aided to a fullness of happiness which, when they had attained, they could never lose. ... We must therefore give due glory to our Creator, because of angels as well as of men it can be said that the charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who has been given to us.[202]

This text contains a clear distinction between nature and grace and, inasmuch as it concerns the angels, there can be no question of St. Augustine's purpose. He intended to differentiate not only between fallen nature and healing grace

201 Ia, q. 12, a. 4.

202 *The City of God,* Bk. XII, chap. 9.

but also between the most perfect and unspoiled angelic nature and the grace that raises that nature to a higher order, the divine, where it lives and acts in the realm of God by participating in His intimate life and, in heaven, enjoys the immediate vision which He has of Himself.

Nature and sin

The mystery of iniquity contained in all sin raises a special difficulty formulated by St. Thomas thus: "Natural love lasts while nature endures. But the love of God more than self does not remain in the angel or man who sins. . . . Therefore it is not natural to love God more than self."

The substance of St. Thomas' replies amounts to this: The sinner and die devil certainly do not love God as the author of the moral law and their own just judge; they turn away from Him in this guise. Nevertheless their natures still incline them to love God as the author of existence and life and to love Him even more dian themselves, for, in spite of everything, they continue to love the existence and life God conserves in them and, as a result, to love its source still more, not willing the good of God as an object distinct from dieir own, but as identified with it.

Because of this primordial inclination, sin is not possible for those who see God face to face and recognize His sovereign goodness. On the contrary, sin is possible for all those who still know the Creator only through His effects and His precepts, some of which gall them. So they can turn from God as the author of the moral law while continuing to love physical and intellectual life and, in a confused way, its supreme source. By loving existence, the sinner, without reflecting or heeding, loves what conserves existence, just as in

an organism a sick part still clings to the life coming to it from the whole body.[203]

But how, it will be asked, can such a difference exist between the very essence of our will's primordial inclination and those concrete psychological manifestations which, even in the baptized, generally appear at the very beginning of moral life and testify to our inordinate love of self, our real egoism? How does it happen that only in the unitive way does a man come to conform his individual life to the first and fundamental inclination of the nature of man? If man's nature is as upright as has just been claimed, why are mortification and the cross so necessary? How can St. Thomas' doctrine be reconciled with what *The Imitation* [204] says about the different motions of nature and grace?

St. Thomas has not left this difficulty unanswered. He shows that the natural inclination to virtue is weakened by sin, which, especially when repeated, gives rise to a contrary habit.[205] Nature remains the same, but any natural inclination ordered to a good action is weakened by an evil act, and this weakness remains after the act as an obstacle to good. Original sin itself has four resultant wounds: (1) the will, turned from God, its natural and supernatural last end, becomes weak in well doing; (2) the intellect tends to err, especially in the guidance of life; and the sensible appetite is inclined (3) to impatience and cowardice, and (4) to sensuality.[206]

After baptism, faithfulness heals these wounds; personal sins magnify them until they serve as the source for concupiscence of the flesh, and of the eyes, the pride of life, and the

203 Ia, q. 60, a. 5, ad 511m; IIa IIae, q. 34, a. 1.
204 Bk. III, chap. 54.
205 Ia IIae, q. 85, a. 1.
206 *Ibid.*, a. 3.

seven capital sins, principles of so many others.[207] If we read the nineteen long questions St. Thomas devoted to these subjects, we shall see that, although his method differs from that of *The Imitation* because he keeps to the speculative and abstract rather than the practical and concrete, he stresses quite as strongly the necessity of mortification.

Evidence of this accord stands out in what St. Thomas tells us about love of self: "Now self-love may stand in a threefold relationship to charity. In one way it is contrary to charity, when a man places his end in the love of his own good. In another way it is included in charity, when a man loves himself for the sake of God in God. In a third way, it is indeed distinct from charity, but is not contrary thereto, as when a man loves himself from the point of view of his own good yet not so as to place his end in this his own good." [208] Hope of divine benefits disposes us to love our Benefactor Himself for Himself.[200]

The Angelic Doctor's teaching provides us with a satisfactory explanation of the sinner's weak natural love of God and inclination to virtue. Passion and vice have attenuated them. Mortification and the cross, on the contrary, bring man's individual life into harmony with the very essence of his nature's ultimate inclination.

There is a last difficulty relative to suffering in reparation for others. How can St. Paul say, "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren"? [210] Instead of harmonizing with man's natural inclination, this act of supreme charity seems contrary to it. The same can be said

207 Ibid., q. 71-89.
208 IIa IIae, q. 19, a. 6.
209 Ibid., q. 27, a. 3.
210 Rom. 9: 3.

of St. John of die Cross who, when asked by our Lord what he desired, answered: "Lord, to suffer and to be despised for Your sake"; and of St. Teresa, whose reply was: "To suffer or to die."

Apropos of St. Paul's words, "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren," all that St. Thomas concedes is that a saint transported by love for Christ's honor and the salvation of his brethren, can desire, should Christ's honor and the salvation of souls require it, to be deprived of the joy of divine union—though not of that union itself, which can be lost only through mortal sin.211 Besides, as Massoulié remarked,212 such a desire belongs to the transports of love, is an intense act of charity and not a permanent state.213

Moreover, St. Paul's words, far from being contrary to our nature, conform to its deepest inclination since fundamentally we love God the author of our nature more than ourselves and are ready to sacrifice ourselves for His sake, if need be, even as the hand endangers itself to save the head. St. Paul makes not an absolute but a conditional sacrifice of his personal beatitude—if necessary for the honor of Christ and the salvation of his brethren.214 His act includes rather than ex-

211 Cf. *Commentarium in Epist. ad Romanos,* IX, 3, concerning the words, "For I wished myself to be an anathema from Christ, for my brethren." Sec also IIa IIae, q. 182, a.2; q.27, a.8, ad turn.

212 *Traité de l'amour de Dieu,* Part Π, chap. 14, pp. 303 if.

213 As stated earlier, should God reveal to a man his future damnation (a thing God would never do), the man would still be bound to love God, the Sovereign Good, above all things, just as the apostle Peter was obliged, even after Christ had foretold his triple denial, to tell the truth and to be loyal to his Lord. To desire eternal life is not the first and highest act of charity; this act is rather to love God for Himself and for His sake alone. Cf. IIa IIae, q.26, a.3; q.27, a.3.

214 In her *Life,* chap. 35, St. Teresa explains this kind of sacrifice and the joy it brings: "Our Lord had already told me that I was going to carry a heavy cross,—though I never thought it would be so heavy as I afterwards found it to be—and

eludes hope, because he bids us to hope like Abraham who, when God asked of him the sacrifice of his only son Isaac, "accounting that God is able to raise up even from the dead," 215 hoped on heroically, hoped on against all hope.216

So St. Thomas' principle applies, as we see, to the highest interior states and, at the same time, serves to help us avoid the extreme and contrary errors of naturalism and pseudo-supernaturalism. Pelagian or Semi-Pelagian naturalism unconsciously supposes a certain pantheistic confusion of human nature with the divine. Contrarily, the pseudo-supernaturalism of Baius, following a subjectivist tendency, blindly assumes an original disorder in our nature itself, which absolutely requires the remedy of grace.217 In the latter view, the original disorder so unthinkingly accepted is seen as tainting our every affection and evidently can be destroyed only at the sacrifice of personal beatitude.

St. Thomas' doctrine rises above these two contrary errors and brings out effectively the harmony of nature and grace without detracting in the least from the gratuitousness and

yet I went forth rejoicing. I was distressed because I had not already begun the fight, since it was our Lord's will that I should be in it. Thus His Majesty gave me strength, and established it in my weakness.

"As I have just said, I could not understand how this could be. I thought of this illustration: if I were possessed of a jewel, or any other thing which gave me great pleasure, and it came to my knowledge that a person whom I love more than myself, and whose satisfaction I preferred to my own, wished to have it, it would give me great pleasure to deprive myself of it, because I would give all I possessed to please that person."

The same joy in sacrifice is expressed by St. Paul in II Cor. 12:9: "Gladly therefore will I glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may dwell in me. For which cause I please myself in my infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ. For when I am weak, then am I powerful."

216 Heb. 11:18.

218 Abraham's heroic hope, so much praised by St. Paul, is at opposite poles from the absolute sacrifice required by the quietists. Cf. Denzinger, nos. 1331, I333> 1335. 1336 ff.

217 Cf. Denzinger, nos. 1021, 1034, 1038.

sublimity of grace. According to him, man's first natural love is for God. Original and personal sin weaken this tendency and leave traces in the soul of man that require purification and even, it may be, violent purification. But after his soul is purified, the initial harmony of his God-given nature shines forth transfigured in his supernatural love of God, the author of grace. Nature suffers no loss at the hands of grace, which destroys sin and its consequences only that it may raise nature to an infinitely higher order where, in the immediate and eternal vision of a loving and beloved God, every human aspiration finds satisfaction beyond the scope of any man's desire.

ARTICLE IV

ST. THOMAS AND NEWTON

Newton, noticing the accelerating fall of an apple, saw the law of gravity; St. Thomas watched it and beheld a figure of the natural or connatural[218] movement of all spiritual creatures toward God.

Reflection and further observation led Newton to conclude that all bodies fall toward the earth with increasing speed and that their speed is affected by their mass and the distance of their fall. He went further in his generalization and concluded that all bodies in the universe mutually attract one another in direct ratio to their mass and in inverse ratio to the square of their distance. He had discovered the law of universal gravity, which rules not only the solar system but the entire physical universe, the whole concourse of heavenly

218 Acts of the infused virtues such as hope and charity, although essentially supernatural, are called connatural because they conform to our nature and proceed from the virtues, a sort of second nature.

bodies, those forming, those dying, fixed stars, suns, planets, satellites, comets, and meteorites.

All men had seen fruit fall from trees; few had asked themselves with that admiring wonder which is the beginning of science and the quest for causes, "Why do bodies fall?" And so far no one had seen in this commonplace fact the law of universal gravity. The word "intellect" comes from *intelligere* or *intus legere,* to read in a sensible fact the intelligible law written there by the Creator. Wisdom, the greatest science, should consist in connecting an intelligible law so discovered with the most general laws of real being and, in die last analysis, with the Supreme Intelligible, the First Being.

Being a mathematician and astronomer more than anything else, Newton did not go that far but stopped at grasping a particular instance of a more general law. And experience verified that all bodies falling freely through space move with uniform acceleration. At the end of the eighteenth century, the English physician Atwood invented a means of demonstrating experimentally the laws governing the fall of bodies, and it was observed that, if in the first second of its fall the speed of a body is 20, then in the next second it is 40, in the third 60, in the fourth 80, and in the fifth 100. And thus a law was established: falling bodies move with uniformly accelerated speed. Why? Modern physics makes no inquiries into final causes and goes only a short distance in the search for efficient causes. Being first and foremost phenomenal, quantitative, and practical, it is limited to studying and measuring phenomena, to establishing their unvarying relations or laws with a view to reproducing them, contenting itself with proving, for example, that the speed of falling bodies increases proportionately with the duration of their fall and that the

contrary takes place when a stone is thrown vertically into the air, for then its speed decreases proportionately until the moving object no longer rises but falls back in virtue of its own weight—the intimate nature of which eludes us.

Innumerable consequences of these physical and verifiable principles are being realized every moment in the universe, whether on our earth or in the most remote nebulae. The law of acceleration is one of the most beautiful things in the whole order of inanimate bodies. At bottom it contains a mystery which thinkers have dwelt on too little in wonder, admiration, and meditation, a mystery which becomes a contradiction if we refuse to admit the existence of a first unmoved Mover who is at once the first cause and last end of all motion in the universe, attracting all things to Himself and being drawn by nothing whatever. The ship rests upon the sea, the sea leans upon the bosom of the earth, the earth is upheld by the long-reaching sun, the sun turns for support to some mightier sphere; but a series of actually subordinate causes cannot go on to infinity. In the last analysis we shall reach a first Mover without need of premotion, who will be his own act, very act, and, since action presupposes being, very being eternally subsistent, Pure Act, as Aristotle called him, without admixture of imperfection or limit: God.[219]

Men of antiquity did not demonstrate the laws governing falling bodies, but they observed that the speed of bodies falling toward the earth increases both with their weight and with the distance they fall. In Aristotle's *De Coelo* [220] we read that bodies with weight fall ever more quickly as they come closer to the center of the earth. In St. Thomas' commentary

219 Metaphysics, Bk. XII, chap. 7.
220 Bk. I, chap. 8, no. 13.

on this work,[221] the same law is formulated in his statement that the speed of falling bodies with mass increases in proportion to the height from which they fall. Of old, men searched for the "why" of this fact. Natural philosophy as they conceived it, was not, like modern physics, concerned only with the phenomenal, quantitative, and practical; it sought to know being, the substance of things, their qualities, their properties, studying their movements in relation to their nature, determining which are natural, which unnatural, striving to make things intelligible dirough their four causes, and coming finally, by simply following the exigencies of the laws of thought and reality, to the First Mover and Last End. Thus the natural philosophy of the ancients was not only quantitative and practical but qualitative and speculative, seeking to make things and their movements intelligible by connecting them with the first principles of reason and ultimately with the supreme Intellect, God, the first being and ordainer of all things.

To the question, "Why do bodies fall faster and faster?" St. Thomas answered, following Aristotle, that they do so because such movement is natural to bodies and because, in falling, they draw ever nearer the place naturally fitting for them. He adds that, on the contrary, a stone thrown vertically into the air moves more and more slowly because this movement, far from being natural to it, is violent or contrary to its natural attraction toward the center of the earth.

Unlike the natural philosophy of other and earlier days, modern physics makes little reference to the distinction between natural and unnatural movement because, in a way, it abstracts from the intimate nature of bodies and the finality of

221 Lectio 17.

their movements. However, it would not dare to deny this distinction absolutely and, in more than one instance, admits it at least implicitly, particularly when treating of the state toward which the universe is tending.

Having classified the movement of falling bodies as natural in contradistinction to unnatural movement, the early philosophers of nature went on to enunciate a law relative to all movement properly called natural, not only in the order of bodies but in the order of spirits as well since these, too, have their natures and natural properties. St. Thomas expressed their further and more general conclusion when he wrote: "For every natural movement is more intense in the end, when a thing approaches the term that is suitable to its nature, than at the beginning, when it leaves the term that is unsuitable to its nature: as though nature were more eager in tending to what is suitable to it than in shunning what is unsuitable. Therefore the inclination of the appetitive power is, of itself, more eager in tending to pleasure than in shunning sorrow."[222]

St. Thomas purposely wrote the *omnis,* "every natural movement," with which this text begins, for he was formulating a universal law applying with equal truth to the movement of all things—stones, plants, animals, men, and angels.[223] Of old, men sought to symbolize this law in a poetic fancy, the swan song; and, resultantly, fell into the habit of giving that title to the last work of any great poet whenever they considered it the culminating point of his genius.

Newton, seeing an apple drop from a tree, reasoned that the

222 Ia Iiae, q.35, a.6.

223 If a man happens to shun sorrow more than he seeks joy, St. Thomas says, this is only accidentally, for example, if the sorrow he experiences robs him not of one but of every joy. *Ibid.*

law of its accelerating fall applied to all bodies in the universe; St. Thomas glimpsed in it the tiny mirroring of an incomparably greater law applying to the movement of all creatures, especially the natural or connatural movement of created spirits gravitating toward God in response to the attraction of His sovereign goodness.224

As we have seen, St. Thomas also remarks that the part loves more than itself the whole to which it naturally belongs because it exists for the whole, the hand naturally endangering and even sacrificing itself to preserve the body. It follows that every creature has a natural inclination to love the good of the universe and God, its author and end, more than itself. As a matter of fact, every creature aspires to a more or less

224 t ;)c objection will be made that the sun moves at an apparently uniform speed, that animals slow down from fatigue, that vivid sensations grow dim, and that ordinary things which we once found striking no longer attract us.

St. Thomas knew these objections and set himself to meet them. He says that the motion of the heavenly bodies is circular and that it is neither more natural for the sun to approach our western sky nor for it to move on past it beyond our sight. The planets move in such wonderful harmony because they are directed by higher and free intellects, themselves subject to God. Their movements are not, therefore, natural in the sense of being actively their own but only as due to a certain natural capacity for being moved. (Ia, q.70, a. 3, ad 4um; q.32, a. 1, ad 2um.)

Further, the heavenly bodies are moved at the same time in two ways, each sharing a motion common to all, and having another motion individual to itself (Ia, q.67, a.4, ad 3um; q.68, a.2, ad 3um; q.104, a.2).

Finally, the uniform circular motion of the heavenly bodies represents a tendency which has already reached its term and has no further perfection to seek (fa, q.55, a.2; *De coelo,* II, 8).

St. Thomas recognized, too, that fatigue slows down the motion of animals to their goals, but this motion is not properly speaking natural or determined by nature itself but only by certain things necessary for the animal's subsistence; even so, the tired horse picks up speed as it nears home.

In regard to vivid sensations becoming dull, this happens because sensation, being caused by something external to us, is, in a sense, violent, and not properly speaking a natural movement; like all violent movements its intensity lessens. And if ordinary things no longer arrest us, this is true in regard to knowledge only since our desire for the things necessary for life (air, water, food) never falls away. Formally considered, any natural movement to a natural end can be said to conform to the principle, *"Omnis motus naturalis intensior est in fine."*

dim likeness of the divine perfection, a likeness that manifests the goodness of the Author of creation.[225]

Natural love of God, unconscious in a being unendowed with reason, becomes more and more conscious and ever and ever stronger in proportion as it rises in the hierarchy of intellectual natures until it reaches the level of the highest angel. "The angel is not," St. Thomas says, "a compound of different natures, so that the inclination of the one thwarts or retards the tendency of the other; as happens in man, in whom the motion of his intellective part is either hindered or thwarted by tire inclination of his sensitive part. But when there is nothing to retard or thwart it, nature is moved with its whole energy. Hence it is reasonable to suppose that the angels, who had a higher nature, were turned to God more mightily and efficaciously." [228]

Infused charity, essentially supernatural in men and angels alike, does not destroy this fundamentally natural inclination, but perfects and elevates it.[22T] The nearer a Christian draws to his God the more quickly he ought to advance towards Him, according to St. Paul's words, "And let us consider one another, to provoke unto charity and to good works; . . . and so much the more as you see the day approaching." [228] In his commentary on this epistle, St. Thomas writes that, in perfecting us, grace inclines us to what is good for our nature which, in this case, is increasing progress toward our natural end. Hence the charity of those in the state of grace ought to increase as tliey draw nearer and nearer their last end, because, as we read in the Scriptures, "The night is passed and the day

225 la, q. 6, a. I; q. 60, a. 5.
226 la, q. 62, a. 6.
227 la, q.6o, a. 5; Ha Hac, q.26, a. 3.
228 Heb. 10: 24 f.

is at hand" [229] and "the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forward and increaseth even to perfect day." [230] St. Thomas' comment is clear. The curve of the saints' lives rises to a zenith from which it never falls away. They know no spiritual twilight; only their bodily powers grow dim with age.

Our Lord expressed the law of universal attraction as it operates in the spiritual order when He said: "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." [231] And again, "No one can come to Me except the Father, who hath sent Me, draw him" [232] and unless My Father draw him through the universal mediator and savior of humanity.

The higher the scale of being the more closely efficient and final causes draw together: our Savior draws us to Himself that He may bring us to the Father, the principle and end of all things, the sovereign and increasingly attractive good. In the lives of the saints, their progress in love quickens with the passing of the years. In spite of the heaviness of age and a certain attendant dulling of the senses, their steps of strong love move on towards God at an ever-increasing pace. Grace, and charity particularly, never cease to grow in their souls. The Blessed Virgin's love for God began under the impulse of a great grace and, meeting no obstacle in her who was without sin, made such eminent progress that nature can give us, in the phenomena of gravity, only a faint, far image of her increasing attraction towards God.

Something analogous to this should take place in us, particularly if we receive Communion daily. Substantially each

229 Rom. 13:12.
230 prov. 4:18.
221 John 12: 32.
222 *Ibid.*, 6: 44-

Communion ought to be more fervent than the preceding, since each should not merely preserve but increase our charity and so dispose us to receive more and more perfectly the Author of grace. The readiness of our will to reach out to Him constitutes substantial devotion and ought in principle to wax stronger and stronger when not bound down with a growing attachment to venial sin.

The consideration of these facts reveals that St. Thomas grasped the universal validity of a law which Newton saw at work in one particular class of things. Newton's conclusions were limited to the order of bodies. St. Thomas was particularly interested in applying to the spiritual realm a law which he held as universal and which he used as a principle from which to reason concerning the hierarchy of angelic natures, grace, and increasing charity, the constant growth of the Mother of God in holiness, and the instantaneous and absolute fullness of grace granted to the soul of Christ.[233]

Every soul journeying to God is a world gravitating toward its cosmic center: this is the law of gravity glorified. As St. Augustine has put it in his own case, *Amor meus pondus meum,* "Love is the weight that draws me." The modern world sees the law of universal attraction only in its material and inferior aspect in the order of inanimate bodies; we dare look at its full beauty. To the modern philosopher the material world may be only a condition for the development of consciousness; for St. Augustine and St. Thomas, and for us, it is a mirror truly though imperfectly reflecting the perfections of the spiritual order. Angels see material things from above, through spiritual things; men see spiritual things from be-

[233] Dia, q.7, a.9, 12.

low, through material things.[231] We must not halt at the reflection but go on to grasp the reality it reveals to us, above all, that supreme reality which is at once the efficient and final cause, tire attraction center, for die material and spiritual universe. As the Psalmist says, the heavens declare the glory of the Lord, making manifest to us a supreme cause moving, ordering, and attracting all things, especially those spiritual worlds, our souls, which should move faster and ever faster toward dieir center of gravity the closer they come to Him.

Rerum tenax vigor
Immotus in te permanens,
Lucis diurnae tempora
Successibus determinans.

134 Ia, q-57, a.i; q.87, 88.

CHAPTER III

Love of God and the Indwelling of the Blessed Trinity

Those who would know what it means to love God should seek to learn it from the Christian doctrine expressed in St. John's words: "God is charity; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him." [1] Reflection on how and why charity makes the soul a living temple of the Trinity gives some appreciation of the grandeur of the love of God in souls possessing His grace, for the special presence of God within us is the foundation of our interior life. With it our interior life begins, generally without any consciousness of it on our part; and with it our interior life comes to full flower when, freed from all stain by mortification and the cross, the soul consciously and truly enters into its heart of hearts and finds the Blessed Trinity at home there.[2]

ARTICLE I

THE SPECIAL PRESENCE OF THE BLESSED TRINITY IN THE JUST

Faith first teaches us that God is present in all His creatures by the general presence of immensity. Knowing this, the Psalmist exclaimed: "Whither shall I go from Thy spirit?

[1] John 4:16.

[2] St. Teresa, *Interior Castle,* Seventh Mansion.

or whither shall I flee from Thy face? If I ascend into heaven, Thou art there; if I descend into hell, Thou art present."[3] Realization of the same truth prompted St. Paul's preaching in the Areopagus: "God, who made the world and all things therein, He being Lord of heaven and earth ... is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are."[4]

St. Thomas[5] gives an excellent explanation of this general presence of God by saying that God is present to all things: first, by His infinite vision from which nothing is hidden, even the secrets of men's hearts; secondly, by His power, the causality of which extends to all that exists in such a way that we cannot act even in the natural order without His concurrence; thirdly, by His essence, which is one with His creative and conserving power and maintains all spiritual and material creation in existence. He is in deep, hidden, and immediate contact with all beings, with what is innermost in each; and if His divine conserving action, the continuation of His creative act, were to cease, all creatures would be at once annihilated, returning to the nothingness from which they came, as light fails when the sun goes down.

Faith teaches us that God is wholly and really present in all created things—plants, men, angels, and devils. He is present to all as a cause is in the effect it produces and conserves, since the being of every creature is the proper effect of God, as illumination is the proper effect of light. God is whole and entire in heaven and whole and entire in the world in such a way that He embraces all things and is not limited by any. He is the burning hearth from which the life

3 Ps. 138: 7 f.
4 Acts 17: 24-28.
5 Ia, q.8, a.3.

of creation flames up, the center of gravity drawing all things to Himself, as the liturgy proclaims.

Rerum Deus tenax vigor,
Immotus in te permanens.

God's special presence as revealed in Scripture

Holy Scripture speaks to us of something beyond God's universal presence in all things; it tells us of His special presence in the just, warning us, in the Book of Wisdom, that "wisdom will not enter into a malicious soul, nor dwell in a body subject to sins." [6] Lest we think only created grace or the created gift of wisdom comes to dwell in the just, our Lord's own words show us that the three divine Persons themselves come to dwell in us. "If anyone love Me," He says, "he will keep My word. And My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him."[7] Every word of this statement is worth noting. "We will come." Who or what? Created effects? Supernatural gifts? No. Those who love and those who come are the same, the divine Persons, Father, Son, and inseparable Spirit promised to us by our Lord and sent visibly to His Church on Pentecost. "We will come," not merely for a little while but to make Our abode with him who receives Us and keeps Us through grace.

The apostles were aware of this marvel and mystery. St. John tells us: "God is charity; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God in him." [8] He who loves God, bears God; him whom God loves, God bears, upholding him in natural and supernatural life.

6 Wisd. 1:4.
7 John 14: 23.
8 1 John 4:16.

Wherefore St. Paul warningly asks us: "Know you not that you are the temple of God and that die Spirit of God dwelleth in you?"[9] "Or know you not that your members are the temple of the Holy Ghost, who is in you, whom you have from God; that you are not your own? For you are bought with a great price. Glorify and bear God in your body."[10] And, together with our Lord and St. John, he tells us that with charity we receive the Giver of charity Himself: "The charity of God is poured forth in our hearts by the Holy Ghost who is given to us."[11]

St. Ignatius of Antioch, too, taught that all true Christians bear God within them and calls them *theophoroi* (God-bearers). So well known was this doctrine in the primitive Church diat the martyrs proclaimed it openly before their judges. We hear St. Lucy answer her judge Paschasius with the claim, "Those who are bearers of the Holy Ghost cannot lack for words." And to this inquiring taunt, "So the Holy Ghost is in you?" she calmly maintains, "Yes. All who lead a chaste and holy life are temples of the Holy Ghost," expressing a doctrine the Church herself has many times proclaimed.[12]

The words of St. John's Gospel already quoted make it clear that the three Persons of the Blessed Trinity truly come to dwell in us, for Christ says "We,"[13] having already alluded to Himself and the Father. Therefore, if this special presence is attributed to the Holy Ghost, it is only because He has His

[9] I Cor. 3: 16.

[10] *Ibid.*, 6: 19 f.

[11] Rom. 5: 5.

[12] *Symbolum Epiphanii,* Dcnz., no. 13; *Cone. Trid.,* Denz., no. 799.

[13] Petavius' opinion that the divine indwelling is a presence proper to the Holy Ghost plainly contradicts this text. Cf. Froget, *The Indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the Souls of the fust,* tr. Racmers (New York: Paulist Press, 1921), pp. 29, 104-13.

special mission as the One sent by the other two Persons from whom He proceeds and because charity likens us to the Holy Ghost just as the intellectual gifts liken us to the Word—although only in heaven will He make us perfect likenesses of Himself, assimilating us to the Father, whose splendor He is.[14]

Theological views on God's special presence

For those seeking a theological explanation of the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just, Father Gardeil's work, *La structure de l'âme et l'expérience mystique,* gives a new and profound study of the subject, based on St. Thomas' explanation of the mystery, and abounding with excellent, original, and suggestive thoughts.

Using the same method as John of St. Thomas, Father Gardeil[15] gives an account of three theological opinions on the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just, presenting the views of Vasquez, then of Suarez and others who share his way of thinking, and, lastly, what he considers the real thought of St. Thomas.

Commenting on the passage in the *Summa theologica*[16] where St. Thomas defines the special mode whereby God dwells in rational creatures by grace as being "as the known in the knower and the object of desire in him who desires," Vasquez makes this statement at the start:

> About the mode of presence no actual controversy is found among doctors of the Church; it is of such a nature as to be insufficient to render God present to things by His essence if He were not already present to them by His immensity. As a matter

14 Cf. Leo XIII, Encycl. *Divinum illud munus.*
15 *Op. vit.,* II, 12 fi.
16 Ia, q.8, a.3.

"If anyone love Me, he will keep My word. And My Father will love him; and We will come to him and will make Our abode with him"?[20] These words plainly mean, "We will really come to him." And the words "I will ask the Father: and He shall give you another Paraclete,"[21] promise a real sending, a real coming.

To avoid subtracting anything from the obvious meaning of such scriptural texts, we apparently must accept St. Thomas' explanation of the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in the just: in those who possess grace the three divine Persons are present as an object known in the knower, as an object loved in the lover; no distance divides Them from Their host who really possesses Them and enjoys a quasi-experience of Their presence. St. Thomas was not afraid to label as error the opinion that we receive the gifts of the Holy Ghost but not the Giver Himself.[22] If Vasquez' theory were true, it would be difficult to see why God does not dwell in those belonging to His Church who are in mortal sin, for, after all, they have God present in them through His immensity, they know him supernaturally by an act of infused faith, they hope in Him, and even, if may be, love Him, though with a wholly inefficacious love. God is really present to all sinners as their conserving cause; as the object of their faith He is present to none, for they know Him only as one far from them and possess no quasi-experience of His nearness. That the just possess God in a deeper and fuller way than this, the Scriptures attest.

20 John 14: 23.

21 *Ibid.,* 14:15.

22 Cf. la, q.43, a.3. ad turn, and Froget, *op. di.,* pp. *60* £f. "No other perfection except grace, added to substance, renders God present in anything as the object known and loved; therefore only grace constitutes a special mode of God's existence in things." la, q. 8, a.3, ad 4um.

Contrary to Vasquez, Suarez holds that, when sanctifying grace and charity are conferred on us, the person of the Holy Ghost is really given to us and comes to us together with the entire Trinity in such a way that, if God were not already present in all things by the presence of His immensity because of His universal operation and as to His substance, He would become really and substantially present in us by reason of the grace and charity uniting us to Him. "By charity," says Suarez, "God and man contract a perfect friendship. Now friendship demands union between friends, not mere oneness through affection but inseparable companionship so far as that is possible. The perfect spiritual friendship between God and man demands by divine right the intimate presence of God in the sanctified soul." 23

As Father Gardeil remarks, the big difficulty with this second opinion comes from the fact that in this life the supernatural love of charity formally constitutes not a real but an affective union between God and us. After all, separated friends are bound together with ties of affection, yet distance lies between them just the same; for friendship as such makes us desire the real presence of the one we love, but it cannot bring him to us.

Many facts confirm this truth. A deep supernatural love for our Savior's sacred humanity fails to make it substantially present to us. Devotion to the Blessed Virgin does not succeed in effecting her real presence within the compass of our hearts. St. Thomas justly says: "The union of lover and beloved is twofold. The first is real union; for instance, when the beloved is present with the lover. The second is union of

23 Suarez, *De Trinitate,* Bk. XII, "De missione divinarum personarum," chap. 5, nos. 10, 12, 13.

affection: and this union must be considered in relation to the preceding apprehension. . . . The first of these unions is caused effectively by love; because love moves man to desire and seek the presence of the beloved, as of one who fittingly belongs to the lover. The second union is caused formally by love; because love itself is this union or bond." [24]

The same reason is the basis for St. Thomas' teaching that perfect beatitude, or possession of God, consists not in love essentially but in the beatific vision, love preceding possession in the form of desire and following upon it in the form of joy.[25]

It follows, as John of St. Thomas says, that the union of love is merely affective, not real. Granted that perfect love ardently desires and seeks the presence of the beloved and that, therefore, a tendency toward real and effective presence arises out of affective union, nevertheless this real presence does not flow from love itself acting as a formal cause nor does love serve as a disposing medium for effecting the real presence of the beloved, as the light of glory unites the intellect of men to the divine essence.[26] Suarez and the theologians who follow him[27] have never really answered this objection. Father Gardeil makes this fact quite plain in his satisfying completion, and slight correction, of Father Froget's excellent work.

St. Thomas' view

The extreme opinions of Vasquez and Suarez evidently fail to convey to us an exact idea of the mystery of the Blessed

24 Ia Hac, q.i8, a. I.
25 *Ibid.,* q.3, a.4.
26 John of St. Thomas, *In lam,* q.43, a-3, disp. xvii, a.3, no. 9.
27 Frogct, *op. cit.,* pp. 69 ff.

Trinity's real and special presence in the just. From his place among the best Dominican Thomists, John of St. Thomas, whom Father Gardeil follows step by step in this matter, proposes a third solution, which he offers as St. Thomas' own thought.

"This union and special presence of God in the [just] soul," he says, "is in addition to the presence of immensity, is distinct from it but necessarily presupposes it." By these last words he puts himself in opposition to Suarez, but for all that, he by no means adopts Vasquez' opinion because he immediately adds: "By sanctifying grace, God becomes present in a new way, so that the soul can know Him experimentally and delight in His presence."[28]

The baptized who are in mortal sin have no such possession of God; although He continues in them as the first conserving cause of their being, they know Him only as someone absent from them. The just know Him as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge really and especially present in them.

Vasquez says that the special presence of the Blessed Trinity in die just is not of itself real but only ideal and affective. Suarez says that of itself it is so real that it is separable from the general presence of immensity. John of St. Thomas, claiming to follow his master with complete faithfulness, teaches that it is distinct from the general presence of immensity but not separable from it, just as in all creatures essence and existence are really distinct aldiough inseparable.[29]

From the start, St. Thomas noted diat other modes of presence—presence by grace, by glory, by hypostatic union—all presuppose the general presence of immensity. In fact, he says

28 John of St. Thomas, *loc. cit.,* nos. 8, 10.

28 Gardeil, *op. cit.,* Bk. II, p. 33, note 2.

in *The Commentary on the Sentences:* "These three modes [by power, presence, and essence, whereby God in His immensity is present to all things He conserves in being] originate not in the diversity of creatures but on the part of God Himself operating in things; and therefore in every creature they are demanded and presupposed by other modes of presence. So, in whomever God is present by union, He is present by grace, and in whomever God is present by grace, He is present by power, presence, and essence."[30]

If a man would learn the meaning of God's indwelling in those who are making their pilgrimage toward heaven, he should contemplate it in those whom grace has brought to full development, the blessed; for grace is the seed of glory, and no one knows the acorn until he has seen the oak. God is substantially present in the glorified soul of the blessed by His immensity inasmuch as He preserves its natural and supernatural being; furthermore, He is there not merely by representation but also in reality, seen and possessed without intermediary in virtue of the light of glory.[31]

If grace is the seed of glory, then at bottom the life of grace and the life of glory are essentially the same supernatural life, the means of apprehending God the author of grace in His intimate life and of loving Him above all things. However, these two states have their differences: in this life we do not see God, but believe in Him and, in the obscurity of faith, we can have a quasi-experimental knowledge of Him such as the Scriptures frequently describe, and sometimes, by a gift of His good pleasure, we may experience Him in us through the gift of wisdom. In heaven the possession of God

80 *Commentary on I of the Sentences,* dist. 37, q. 1, a. 2, ad 3 11m.
81 Cf. Gardeil, *op. cit.,* II, 72.

is absolutely certain and inamissible, whereas in this life the just cannot, without a special revelation, have absolute certainty of being temples of God and they can at any time lose the life of grace by mortal sin. Apart from these differences, the life of grace continues as the life of glory and remains, in essentials, the same supernatural life.

In the state of grace, therefore, God is substantially present in the just by His immensity inasmuch as He preserves its natural and supernatural being; furthermore, He is there by a special presence that is again real and not merely ideal, representative, and affective; He is there as an object really present and knowable in a quasi-experimental manner, an object possible for us to possess imperfectly and in some way to enjoy. So Thomas puts this truth into plain words, saying:

> The divine Person is fittingly sent in the sense that He exists newly in anyone; and He is given as possessed by anyone; and neither of these is otherwise than by sanctifying grace.
>
> For God is in all things by His essence, power, and presence, according to His one common mode, as the cause existing in the effects which participate in His goodness. Above and beyond this common mode, however, there is one special mode belonging to the rational nature wherein God is said to be present as the object known is in the knower, and the beloved in the lover. And since the rational creature by its own operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode, God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. So no other effect can be put down as the reason why the divine Person is in the rational creature in a new mode, except sanctifying grace. Hence, the divine Person is sent, and proceeds temporally only according to sanctifying grace?2

82 la, q-43, a.3.

God dwells in no man without sanctifying grace and charity. Natural knowledge of Him, even the supernatural knowledge of infused faith united to hope, fails to make Him ours. We must know Him by living faith and the gifts of the Holy Ghost united to charity; then we shall hold Him not as a distant being apprehended by some mere representation but as a real person here and now with us, ours to possess and enjoy.

Vasquez missed seeing this beautiful truth, his nominalist tendency preventing him from grasping the divine reality hidden in the words of Holy Scripture and tradition. St. Thomas, however, has driven home the point very clearly in the rest of the article just transcribed: "Again, we are said to possess only what we can freely use or enjoy: but to have the power of enjoying the divine Person can only be according to sanctifying grace. Moreover, the Holy Ghost is possessed by man, and dwells within him, in the very gift itself of sanctifying grace. Hence the Holy Ghost is given and sent." 38 His *Commentary on the Sentences*^ also contains an important text stating that, for the Holy Ghost to be sent, for Him to take up His abode in man in an entirely new way, any kind of knowledge of God will not suffice but only a quasi-experimental knowledge proceeding from a gift of God that unites us to Him according to the proper mode of this divine Person, that is, by love. Joined to charity, this gift, called wisdom, judges divine things connaturally, with a loving understanding grounded on charity.36

St. Thomas38 gives an even more exact statement of his

33 Ibid., ad lutn et 2um; la, q. 8, a.3, c. et ad 411m.
34 Bk. I, dist. 14, q.2, a.2, ad 311m.
33 Ila Hae, q.45, a.2.
33 Ibid., ad 2utn.

thought in the same place in his *Commentary on the Sentences,* saying:

> In the procession of the Spirit, as we are here discussing it, in the sense that it includes the giving of the Holy Spirit, it does not suffice that there be a new relation, of any kind whatsoever, of the creature to God; but there must be reference to Him as to something possessed; because what is given to anyone is possessed by him in some manner. A divine Person cannot be possessed by us except as a perfect delight, and in this way is had through the gift of glory; or as an imperfect delight, and in this way is had through the gift of *gratia gratum faciens* or rather as that through which we are joined to the delectable in so far as the divine Persons, by a kind of impression of themselves, leave in our souls certain gifts which we formally enjoy, namely, love and wisdom; wherefore the Holy Spirit is called the pledge of our inheritance.

According to this passage the quasi-experimental knowledge of God spoken of in the preceding text, is rooted expressly in the gift of wisdom united to charity. St. Thomas preserves exactly the same doctrine in a shorter form in the *Summa theologica:* "Since the rational creature by its own operation of knowledge and love attains to God Himself, according to this special mode [through sanctifying grace] God is said not only to exist in the rational creature, but also to dwell therein as in His own temple. . . . By the gift of sanctifying grace the rational creature is perfected so that it can freely use not only the created gift itself, but enjoy also the divine Person Himself." [37]

For it to be said that the Blessed Trinity dwells in us, we must have the proximate power for knowing God by quasi-

[37] Ia, q.43, a.3, c. et ad turn.

experimental knowledge. St. Thomas asserts this not only as a result of theological deduction but because of the express statement of Holy Scripture. We read in die Epistle to the Romans: "For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. . . . You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry: Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God." [38] In his commentary on this epistle St. Thomas says that the Holy Spirit gives testimony to our spirit by the filial love He produces in us.

St. John has a like message: "And as for you, let the unction, which you have received from Him, abide in you. . . . His unction teacheth you of all things, and is truth and is no lie." [39] His anointing, therefore, teaches experimentally by the effect of filial love produced in us, giving us both illumination for the intellect and inspiration for the will.

And our Lord Himself says to us: "The Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth Him not nor knoweth Him. But you shall know Him; because He shall abide with you and shall be in you." [40] "But the Paraclete, the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring all things to your mind, whatsoever I shall have said to you."[41] When die apostles must preach truly, when the Church must define infallibly, when the faithful must endure bravely, then shall this Advocate of Christ bring to minds in need the teaching of their Master. "But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to

[38] Rom. 8: 14-16.
[39] I John *2: 27.*
[40] John 14:17.
[41] *Ibid.,* v. 26.

speak. For it is not you that speak, but the Spirit of your Father that speaketh in you."[42]

With the same thought in mind St. Paul writes: "But the sensual man perceiveth not these things that are of the Spirit of God. For it is foolishness to him: and he cannot understand, because it is spiritually examined. But the spiritual man judgeth all things, and he himself is judged of no man."[43] As St. Thomas explains in his commentary on this epistle, the spiritual man judges with an enlightened intellect and an inspired will.

To make the idea of a quasi-experimental knowledge of God comprehensible to us, St. Thomas was fond of using the quotation from the Apocalypse that reads: "To him that overcometh I will give the hidden manna and will give him a white counter; and in the counter a new name written, which no one knoweth but he that receiveth it."[44] So the just man, says St. Thomas, can have a certain knowledge of the existence of sanctifying grace within himself, "because whoever receives it knows by experiencing a certain sweetness, which he who does not receive it, does not experience."[45]

St. John speaks of the same quasi-experimental knowledge when saying: "He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is charity."[46] Evidently there can be no question here of either philosophical knowledge of God or that knowledge of Him by faith possible to a baptized person in mortal sin. The whole doctrine of St. Thomas, founded immediately on Scripture, can be expressed in a synthesis written by John of

42 Matt. 10: 19 f.
43 I Cor. 2: 14 f.
44 Apoc. 2: 17.
45 la Ilae, q.112, a.5.
4«I John 4: 8.

St. Thomas[47] and incorporated by Father Gardeil[48] into his own work.

God in His immensity reaches out to all the effects of His power and, having given them being, continues to act as the root of all creatures, pouring being into them as the vine pours sap into its branches. To none is He an informing form, as man's soul to his body; to all, He is sufficient cause, the universal root and principle from which their being proceeds. Holy Scripture describes Him to us as "upholding all things by the word of His power,"[49] . . . recalling to the mind of man, "thou bearest not the root; but the root thee."[50] For "He is before all; and by Him all things consist."[51] "He is not far from every one of us. For in Him we live and move and are."[52]

God exists in all things as their hidden root, their principle of being, nearer their being's very core than their form to their matter or their substance to their accidents, entirely and intimately filling each with His presence by giving all that they are to all.

Despite the wonder of this presence, through it God is with us not as friend to friend but as the root of all creatures and the universal principle intimately united to His effects. How differently He manifests Himself through grace, showing Himself to us as an object of our created intellect, not as any other object we know but as uniquely and entirely penetrating it in a way possible only to the root of our being. His introduction of Himself, the holy familiarity and intercourse that follow, necessarily require a new presence of God in the soul altogether other than that which it shares with all creation. Through grace God offers Himself to the

47 *Ctirsus thcol., in lam,* q.43, disp. xvii, a.3.
48 *Op. cit.,* II, 74.
40 Heb. 1:3.
50 Rom. ii: 18.
61 Col. 1:17.
62 Acts 17: 27 f.

soul as an object of knowledge and love, coming to it in a new and real (not merely an ideal and affective) way. Intimately ours as the cause and reason of our being, He is present in us in an entirely different manner from any other object of knowledge, making us know and love Him through experiencing His blessed familiarity, giving us the kind of knowledge of Him that an angel has of its own substance, which is manifest and united to his intellect as intimately and really present and experimentally known.[53]

No Thomists reject this synthesis of John of St. Thomas. If, in studying the mystery of God's indwelling, some, like the Carmelites of Salamanca, seem inclined to follow Suarez' manner of speaking, apparently this is only because they failed to go deeply enough into the subject. They seem to have meant only that if, by an impossible assumption, God were not really present in the just man as the conserving cause of his natural being, He would become really present in him as the cause of grace and charity and as an object quasi-experimentally known and loved above all things.[54]

We owe Father Gardeil our gratitude for having brought this fundamental point back to light. Since the publication of Father Froget's work no one else has written so profound a study of the mystery which serves as the basis for Christian spirituality. At the moment of justification, without any consciousness of our own, our spiritual life begins with God's indwelling; and in that inner sanctuary to which St. Teresa

88 Vallgornera, *Theol. mystica D. Thomae* (Turin cd., 1891), nos. 886-92, deserves credit for having recognized the worth of this quotation from John of St. Thomas which he reproduced word for word in his work published in 1662. It is not the only thing he has borrowed and for which he should have paid his debt of acknowledgment to the author.

64 This represents the view of the Carmelites of Salamanca especially. Cf. Salmanticcnscs, *Cursus theol. in lam,* q.43, a.3, disp. xix, dub. v, nos. 96, 99.

refers in her Seventh Mansion it reaches its culmination by and with the same divine presence.[68]

ARTICLE II

THE NATURE OF MAN'S QUASI-EXPERIMENTAL KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

First of all, as is evident, the just man's knowledge of the indwelling Godhead is not discursive, not inferred. St. Thomas gives abundant proof for this truth in a number of texts; for example, when showing that the gift of wisdom, from which experimental knowledge of God proceeds, judges not by reasoning but by a certain connaturality or conformity to divine things founded on charity and given to it by a special illumination of the Holy Ghost.[66]

This quasi-experimental knowledge of God excludes reasoning, for it does not make use of the effect of filial love as an objective term from which to conclude to His presence. The just man can experience within himself the effect of filial love as making known to him the vivifying presence of God, the author of salvation; somewhat as the soul, through its acts of intellect and will, knows its own existence experimentally

55 Father Galtier, S.J., challenges the interpretation of St. Thomas* view given by both John of St. Thomas and Gardcil, saying that their interpretation makes the quasi-experimental knowledge of God in the souls of the just actual whereas in most cases, especially in children, who have no such actual knowledge, it is only habitual. Properly to interpret St. Thomas' passage, la, q.43, a.3, we have only to recognize what it implies and what John of St. Thomas and Gardcil both take for granted, that the three divine Persons are *knowable* as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge before they are actually *knou,n'* and that this very knowableness demands the special presence of which St. Thomas speaks. To put it in another way, in the words of Galtier himself: "The divine Persons already substantially present offer themselves [to the just] to be known and enjoyed." Cf. *L'habitation en nous des trois Personnes* (Bcauchesne, 1928), pp. 183 fi., 262.

68 Ha Ilae, q.45, a.2; *De veritate,* q.26, a.3, ad i8um; *in Ep. ad Rom.* viii, 14.

and without reasoning, perceiving not thought in general but its own act of thinking and, by it, its substantial subject. In this way its act is at once that which is known by experience and that which makes known to the soul its own substance.[67] As much must be said of the effect of filial love in relation to the vivifying presence of God; for, by the special inspiration of the gift of wisdom, God makes Himself in some way felt as the radical principle of our whole life, more intimate to us than we are to ourselves.

To produce this quasi-experimental and non-discursive knowledge in us, the Holy Ghost, by His illumination and inspiration, uses a means prepared by charity, the soul's connaturality or conformity to divine things. In itself, a deep attachment to chastity makes us sound judges of what is in conformity with chastity, even if we are ignorant of moral theology; for, from the very fact of this attachment a relation of proportion exists between the subject so disposed and those things in harmony with the virtue, which appear to him as entirely fitting and in line with his own aspirations.[68] Likewise, as our love for God grows, so does our apprehension of His truth and supreme goodness, even when we have to see Him in those decrees of His will that remain obscure and disconcerting to us. The good hidden in this divine obscurity lies out of the reach of our understanding, but supernatural love makes us taste and see that it is good. By His special illumination, the Holy Ghost uses our interior disposition of love for the divine Persons, which He Himself has aroused,

57Q. 10, a.8; *Summa,* Ia, q.87, a.i; *De veritate,* q. 14, a.8, ad 41m; Cajetan, in Ilam llae, q.i, a.i, II.

68In his commentary on la llae, q.58, a.5, no. 8, Cajetan gives a profound explanation of Aristotle's principle, "Such as a man is, such does the end seem to him" *(Ethics,* Bk. ΠΙ). Cf. also la Hae, q.68, a.i, *2, 3,* 4 and Ila llae, q.68, *de donis, disp.* 18, a.4, no. 11.

to make Their presence manifest to us. In the *De veritate,*[59] St. Thomas says that from affection for divine things arises a manifestation of them, and he interprets in this sense St. John's words: "He that loveth Me shall be loved of My Father; and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him."[60] Surely St. Paul's words have the same meaning: "You have received the spirit of adoption of sons, whereby we cry, Abba (Father). For the Spirit Himself giveth testimony to our spirit that we are the sons of God."[61] Mother and child have no need of reasoning to reveal their hearts to each other, but know each other deeply through their mutual love. The same is true of God and those who are born of God.[62]

At this point it may be easy to grant that the just man's knowledge of God is evidently not discursive and yet wonder why St. Thomas calls it *quasi experimentalis* instead of *proprie experimentalis?* There are two reasons why he adopts this terminology. First, in this life, we do not, properly speaking, experience God immediately but only through the effect of filial love, which He produces in us.[64] If the divine essence were presented to our intellects immediately, without any created effect or idea acting as a medium of knowledge, then either we should have the vision of God because of the light of glory uplifting our intellects to apprehend God,[65] or we should not have any such knowledge, however obscure, for

50 *De veritate,* q.26, a.3, ad 18um.
60 John 14:21.
61 Rom. 8:15.
62 John 1:13.
63 *Commentary on the Sentences,* I, dist. 14, q.2, a.2, ad 3um.
64 St. Thomas, *in Ep. ad Rom.,* viii, 16; IIa IIae, q.97, a.2, ad 2um; *De veritate,* q.26, a.3, ad 18um.
65 Ia, q.12, a.5.

lack of that light.[80] The intellect[07] either attains to God immediately or it does not; it immediately apprehends the divine essence as it is in itself or does not. If it does, then it enjoys the beatific vision at least in some degree; if it does not, then it has no immediate knowledge of God. The beatific vision is the only absolutely immediate knowledge or experience of God. It alone attains not only to God Himself, as faith too apprehends Him, but also to God as He is in Himself, in His inner life, a reality impossible for any created effect to represent.[88] In this fact lies rooted one of the reasons why, in this life, the just man cannot have absolute certitude of being in the state of grace, of being the temple of God, unless God reveals it to him. "But the principle of grace and its object is God, who by reason of His very excellence is unknown to us, according to Job 26: 26. 'Behold God is great, exceeding our knowledge.' And hence His presence in us and His absence cannot be known with certainty, according to Job 9:11: 'If He come to me, I shall not see Him; if He depart, I shall not understand.' " [89]

Secondly, the just man's knowledge of God is called quasi-experimental and not simply experimental because he cannot differentiate with absolute certitude between the supernatural effect of filial love and a certain natural lifting up of the heart which resembles it. Even when not in the state of grace, a poet may so delight in the beauty and perfection of God that he translates both for himself and for us as to mistake a

08 We maintain that this immediate experience could not be in the intellect but must be in the will, which attains God immediately by charity. In this sense it can be called an immediate affective experience.

07 Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics,* Bk. IX, chap. to.

88 la, q. 12, a.2.

88 la Uae, q. 112, a. 5.

natural mood for a supernatural state, complacence for charity. In this life, then, the just man enjoys no absolute certitude of being in the state of grace but only a reasonable certainty to which he concludes from certain signs, such as his joy in divine things, contempt for the things of the world, and peace of conscience. God's assurance in the Apocalypse has its application here: "To him who overcometh, I will give the hidden manna . . . which no man knoweth but he that receiveth it";[70] he shall know a certain sweetness unshared by those who have not grace.[71]

Because he maintains that Holy Scripture implies no absolute or literal certitude in this quotation, St. Thomas cites other passages that demonstrate the truth of his opinion, such as St. Paul's words, "I am not conscious to myself of anything. Yet am I not hereby justified; but He that judgeth me is the Lord."[72] And the petition of the Psalmist, "From my secret ones [sins] cleanse me, O Lord,"[73] from sins indirectly voluntary, sins of negligence in not considering or accomplishing what could and should be considered and accomplished.[74]

As the soul's purification progresses and it continues to grow in charity and the gifts of the Holy Ghost, its quasi-experimental knowledge of God becomes more and more perfect. St. John of the Cross thinks that the soul is never joined to God in transforming union without being confirmed in grace.[75]* And some writers[78] consider that a state so

70 Apoc. 2:17.
71 Ia Ilae, q. H2, a.5.
72 I Cor. 4: 4.
73 Ps. 18: 13.
74 Ia Ilae, q.6, a.3.
75 *Spiritual Canticle,* st. 22.
70 Philip of the Blessed Trinity *(Theol. myst.,* Proem., a.8), Scaramelli, and others.

sublime requires that God make known to the soul, His spouse, the indissoluble friendship existing between them. In other words, they hold that God does accord the soul that special revelation which the Council of Trent declares is necessary for anyone to know with absolute certitude that he is in the state of grace. Before the passive purifications of the soul,[77] its quasi-experimental knowledge of God lacks much in depth and penetration, and St. Thomas has done well to give us an insight into its character by purposely using the term "quasi."

The role of quasi-experimental knowledge in the spiritual life

With Father Gardeil, we would insist that to St. Thomas' mind the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is inconveivable without some quasi-experimental knowledge of God's presence, a truth that strongly confirms a doctrine we regard as traditional and have held for many years: namely, that infused contemplation of the mysteries of faith belongs to the normal progress of sanctity. Father Gardeil has devoted his best efforts to showing that mystical experience comes to the Christian life of grace as its highest, though entirely normal, development, its full and final flowering. As a matter of fact, the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity is explicable only so far as God can be known and loved as the object of quasi-experimental knowledge. And, since this knowledge proceeds from faith enlightened by understanding and wisdom and since these gifts are united to charity, it follows that, as char-

7T Gardeil, *op. cit.,* II, 207 H. The passive night of the senses is considered one of the preludes to mystic experience; it comes, however, only in the sixth mansion of St Teresa after the prayer of union described in the fifth mansion and before transforming union as described in the seventh.

ity increases, the quasi-experimental knowledge of God grows too,[78]*manifesting itself either in a clearly contemplative form or in one more directly orientated to action. Quasi-experimental knowledge attains to its full perfection in contemplation, which, according to St. John of the Cross, begins in die illuminative way and develops during the unitive.[78]

When the Holy Ghost comes to dwell in the just He brings His seven gifts,[80] two of which play a special part in the soul's purification. The gift of knowledge is particularly active during the night of the senses, when it keeps before the mind the emptiness of all created things;[81] the gift of understanding, during the night of the spirit, when it leads the soul to penetrate more and more deeply into the spirit of the mysteries of faidi and to abandon all too human conceptions of divine things.[82] The quasi-experimental knowledge of God needs these two purifications to clear away the obstacles put in its way by unconscious egoism and self-love. At life's beginning, thought of self so dominates man that he unconsciously seeks to relate everything to self; after the purifications of the senses and the spirit, he gives first place to the thought of God and His glory and the salvation of souls.

Experimental knowledge of God's infinite goodness and that of our own nothingness and misery keep pace with each other, and the soul learns, as St. Catherine was taught by her divine Spouse, "I am He who is; thou art she who is not." This knowledge St. Catherine describes to us as having two

78 la Ilae, q.66, a.2; q.68, a.5.
70 The Dark. Night, Bk. 1, chap. 14.
80 Cone. Trid., sess. VI, cap. 7; Dcnzinger, no. 799. Cf. also Denzinger, no. 83.
81 Ila Ilae, q.9, a.4.
82 Ila Ilae, q.8, a.7.

complementary aspects which share and share alike in mutual development, like two opposite points in an ever-growing circle. The more a man realizes his own misery, the more he realizes by contrast the infinite goodness of God, and his fear of sin increases with his love for God until he reaches the hour of perfect knowledge when, in the home of his Father, he receives the immediate vision of the divine essence. That we may reach this end, our souls must undergo purification, we must place ourselves wholeheartedly in the school of Jesus Christ and there learn by experience the deep affinity existing between the cross of Christ and the love of God.

The invisible missions of the divine Persons and the mystical life

The mystical life serves as the normal completion and crowning of the life of grace because of the indwelling of the Blessed Trinity. During the latter half of the seventeenth century, Louis Chardon, one of the Thomistic theologians to see this truth most clearly, wrote a book entitled *La croix de Jésus* which treats of this subject in some profound and little known chapters on the invisible missions of the Word and the Holy Ghost.[83]

Chardon first shows [84] that the divine Persons are not only the object of knowledge and supernatural love but also the principles of supernatural operation. He says: "We naturally conclude that, since grace is communicated with a view to operation, it does not render the uncreated Persons present in us in the manner of a mere idle habit, as though God

[85] III, chap. 2-6.
[84] *Ibid.*, chap. 4.

were to come to us as a man asleep. . . . They are no longer present to us simply as objects powerfully attracting our operations but as actualizing, effecting, applying, and directing our operations for, as Christ says, 'My Father worketh until now; and I work.' "

A little before this he expresses his thought with even greater precision: "That it may attain to God Himself and possess Him, the soul needs the help of those supernatural gifts that are inseparable from the divine Persons. These gifts of Theirs make us like to Them by assimilating and conforming us to Their likeness, so that the divine Persons Themselves become the lovable object of our operations, and, by Their gifts, their all-powerful principle, support, and end." By the production of the intellectual gifts in us, the Son, the Eternal Wisdom, is said to be invisibly sent by the Father; and, by the inpouring of charity, the Holy Ghost, who is Love, is also said to be invisibly sent by the Father and the Son.[85] The invisible missions of the divine Persons conform to die visible missions of the Incarnation and Pentecost.

Concerning the relation of the temporal missions of the divine Persons to the eternal processions, Chardon follows the teaching of St. Thomas when he writes: "The temporal mission of a divine Person is only an extension of the eternal procession in God. . . . The condition of time adds nothing new to the immutable and fully perfect God. Change occurs only in the creature, who begins to participate in what God is from all eternity. Thus the Word, begotten by the Father from all eternity, and with Him the Holy Ghost, are invisibly sent to the just at the moment of conversion." [80] The Father,

[85] Ia, q. 43, a. 2-8.
[80] *Ibid.*

since He does not proceed from any person, cannot be sent but dwells in us together with the Son and the Holy Ghost.

Asking the question, "How are the divine Persons the principle of mystical operations in souls progressing in grace?" Chardon answers it by saying:

> God ordinarily communicates Himself to His creatures according to the measure of their dispositions. As a man's purification advances, the divine Persons become more intimately present to him through their missions. They are more deeply united to him and more completely possessed by him as the object and principle of his soul's higher operations. . . .
>
> Charity may at times act with such efficacious strength that it reduces souls to a passive state in regard to divine things; they are no longer conscious of their cooperation and concurrence in supernatural and Godlike acts. They do not so much live the life of God as the life of God lives in them; they are more loved than loving; and even when they love, they receive rather than give.[87]

Beginners are rightly cautioned against being held back by sensible graces, for man must give as well as receive, and the gifts he offers God must include himself. Yet in the passive states which Chardon refers to here, God accomplishes in us and for us a much more perfect and complete giving of ourselves that we could ever achieve by our own efforts with ordinary actual grace.

Chardon concludes:

> What joy is ours to have God make His home in us! He fills our hearts' deepest recesses, pours Himself out over the soul's entire compass, overflows into its powers and faculties, and penetrates all and destroys nothing, making us participants of His divine society

87 Chardon, *op. at.,* chap. 6.

and sharers, by imitation, in His own natural life that we may be caught up and embraced by the fullness of Divinity.

Through the invisible missions of the divine Persons, since they conform to the visible missions of the Incarnation and Pentecost, God is in us and we are in God. More than that, since They are principles of operations in us, They necessarily make us change and advance continually along the way of perfection, even if we have reached its eminences."

Chardon could have found no better way of saying that the purgative way normally leads to the mystical life and that, when die soul has entered there, it begins by degrees to advance along the way of illumination and of union. He immediately tells us, too, the reason for spiritual progress, saying:

As principles of supernatural operation, these wonderful missions cannot allow grace to remain idle but force it to advance, sometimes so much that the soul is said to change its state and experiences a newness of grace that lifts it to a height incomparably above its first sanctification. In the measure that it advances in grace and charity, the divine Persons are present anew within it (or better, are sent to it in a new way, as St. Thomas says) [88] and the soul possesses Them with rights and privileges it had not formerly.

Because it keeps the soul solicitous for its progress and ready for the most difficult and fervent acts of virtue, the truth of the divine missions is one of the strongest incentives for spiritual advancement, stimulating beginners, encouraging the proficient, and confirming the perfect. It makes the soul eager to grow in grace that God may abide in it more fully, more deeply, more personally, by a union growing more and more sublime as it becomes purer, stronger, and more intimate.[89]

88 Ia, q.43, 4.6.

88 La croix de Jésus, ist ed., p. 457. We owe Father Bremond our gratitude for having called attention to the profound and beautiful pages of the original edition.

Louis Chardon's words were written before the time of Bossuet and Fénelon. In his work he emphasizes another truth even more than the relation of the divine missions to supernatural life; that truth, as we shall see, is the affinity existing between grace and the cross. He points out in the Gospels and Epistles the summits toward which converge theological speculation like St. Thomas' and the mysticism of men like Tauler and St. John of the Cross. And he leads us to appreciate more and more fully how the theology of the great masters, because it is derived by faith from divine revelation, disposes us to desire infused contemplation that we may, by an act of living faith enlightened by the gifts, enter into and enjoy the mysteries revealed to us by God. So Chardon, in a really vital way, brings us back to the very source of theology, the truths of Scripture and tradition.

NOTES

EXPERIENCE OR QUASI-EXPERIENCE?

In opposition to the theologians for whom "that which is immediately perceived is not God here present but His effects in the soul," [80] Father Gardeil is inclined to admit an "immediate experience" of God. He finds that these authors react with good reason "against fantastic opinions which ascribe to the soul, particularly in the prayer of union, a sight or intuition of God through species miraculously superadded to the ideas of faith." He adds:

> But, in my opinion, these authors fall into exaggerations in their reaction against such opinions. They regard God's impressions on the soul, the divine touches it experiences, as effects received and

80 Gardeil, *op. cit.,* I, xv ff.; II, 238 *ft.*

remaining in the soul and claim that the soul perceives these effects and only these effects, that its regard rests on them as on an objective term from which it concludes to the presence of God. If this be true, then mystical contemplation in its apogee, the experience of God, consists essentially in an inference and necessitates reasoning. I do not think that this mode of attaining to the presence of God is the mode of experimental and, consequently, of immediate knowledge of God, who gives of His fullness in the prayer of union.[91]

In the first of these two opinions criticized by Father Gardeil, we can recognize the thought of Bishop Farges, the intuition of God by infused ideas; in the second, the entirely contrary view of Father Saudreau, the knowledge of God's presence through His effects. Saudreau would probably answer this criticism by saying that he does not hold that quasi-experimental knowledge of God through the effect of filial love is inferential but that it is supra-discursive, an act of the gift of wisdom transcending reason. This position we too maintain.[92] In his work, *Western Mysticism,* Dom Butler sets down Father Gardeil's manner of expression as being in opposition to the common interpretation of St. Thomas' doctrine, but Father Gardeil has since explained his position on this point.[93] In substance we are in agreement with him.

We feel certain, and have said so already,[94] that some forms of experimental knowledge are by no means discursive and yet are not absolutely immediate either. As soon as my sight perceives the color of an object, my intellect, without reason-

81 Ibid., 245.

82 Christian Perfection and Contemplation, pp. 270 *ft.*

83 Cf. Butler, *Western Mysticism* (New York: Dutton, 1922), pp. Ixv ff.; and Gardeil, "Examen de conscience," *Revue Thomiste,* January, 1929, pp. 70-85. Cf. also the July, 1929, number.

84 Christian Perfection and Contemplation, Fr. ed., II, 115.

ing, apprehends the substance of that colored object; the substance itself, unlike its color, is not sensible but is called *sensible per accidens* because it is grasped immediately by the intellect with the first presentation of the sensible object.[95] Here we have an instance of intellectual experimental knowledge without reasoning, which is, however, mediate in the sense that it presupposes sensation and its object as an intermediary. As Aristotle says, by seeing Callias I see without reasoning that he lives, although life itself is not sensible like color and sound.

We have an experimental knowledge of our own souls, too, inasmuch as they operate as the principles of our intellectual and voluntary acts. We do not arrive at this knowledge by reasoning, yet we attain to the soul's substance only by means of its acts. "Plato or Socrates perceives that he has an intellectual soul because he perceives that he understands."[96] And, as the Angelic Doctor also teaches, the angel, too, knows his own substance only by means of a mental term, for the substance of an angel, although in itself intelligible in act, is not of itself known in act *{intellecta in actii)* ; for the angel is not pure act, not its own existence, not its own intellection, and so has to be expressed in an interior word to be known. But the reality expressed in that mental word, which makes him an image of the Trinity, is not far from him.[97]

Lastly, in discussing the knowledge which a just man possesses of God by tire gift of wisdom and through the action of the Holy Ghost, St. Thomas purposely and pointedly adds

05 St. Thomas, *Comm. in lib. II de anima,* lect. 13.

80 la, q.87, a.i.

87 Cf. St. Thomas, *Contra Gentes,* Bk. IV, chap. II, nos. 1, 4, and in the *Angelicum,* 1928, fasc. I, the author's study of St. Thomas' proof, *"Utrum mens seipsam per essentiam cognoscat an per aliquam speciem."*

the qualification "quasi" whenever he refers to it as "experimental." In the final pages which Father Gardeil devoted to this question 98 and in those where he shows so well how infused contemplation proceeds from faith enlightened by the gifts, he comes very near the explanation just given, which we hold as traditional among Thomists.

The question of a purely natural immediate apprehension of God

In a recent publication,99 Father Picard poses the question: "Can an immediate apprehension of God other than the beatific vision be admitted?" And he gives the answer that even in the natural order man can have an immediate though obscure apprehension of God's presence. Father Picard then seeks to discover the part of such an immediate apprehension of God in the mystical state, trying to find support for his views as being implied by St. Thomas.100 His interpretation of St. Thomas' texts is highly debatable; for example, when he uses St. Thomas' *Commentary on the Sentences* 101 by quoting his answer to an objection according to St. Augustine and omitting his answer according to Aristotle. Further, references to the opusculum *De intellectu et intelligibili* carry no weight since this work is not authentic.

Certainly God is intimately present to us in the natural order since He is the conserving cause of all creatures; but that fact does not make Him present to us in such a way that

98 *Op. cit.,* II, 254 ft.; *Revue Thomiste,* 1929, articles quoted above.

99 *Lu saisie immédiate de Dieu dans les états mystiques* (Paris: Editions Spes, 1923).

100 *Ibid.,* pp. 20-30. Cf. the author's criticism of this position, *Bulletin Thomiste.* March, 1925, p. 250.

101 D.3, q.4, a. 5.

in the natural order we have an obscure immediate apprehension of His presence—as Father Picard would lead us to believe. Treating *ex professo* of God's natural presence in us, St. Thomas says: "No other perfection, except grace, added to substance, renders God present in anything as the object known and loved; therefore only grace constitutes a special mode of God's existence in things." [102] He repeats the same conclusion in many other places in his works.[103] Father Picard explains his use of Vallgornera's interpretation [104] of those texts of St. Thomas which seem favorable to his theory by saying that he quotes Vallgornera not so much because he seeks to lean on his authority as because he finds in him an excellent expression of his own thought: "namely, that the ontological presence of God [105] produces in the soul's depths an immediate experimental knowledge of Him, analagous to a man's consciousness of self." He immediately adds: "In detail, the theory I propose is perhaps a shade different from his. He demands the state of grace for the ontological presence of God to become perceptible even in an obscure fashion; I do not see the necessity for it." [106] Do these two theologies, then, differ "perhaps" only in detail and by just a shade of meaning? The "shade of difference" has to do with the distinction and the distance between the order of nature and that of grace, a distance so great that the natural powers of man and angel could develop to infinity without ever attaining to the formal object specifying either infused faith or the gift of wisdom.

102 Ia, q.8, a.3, ad 411m.

103 Ia, q.12, a.ii, ad 4um; q.43, a.3; q.88, a.3; q.84, a.7; q.85, a.i; q.87, a.2, ad 2um et 311m; also *In Boetium de Trinitate,* q. 1, a.3.

Mystica theologia D. Thomae, q.4, disp. 1, a.4, no. 866.

105 The presence alluded to here is that of God as the conserving cause of our existence.

106 Picard, *op. cit.,* p. 55.

And that is what Vallgornera, together with St. Thomas, speaks about in the quotation referred to. Of course, Father Picard admits that our natural intuition of God is obscure and that "under the influence of grace and the gift of wisdom, in the ascetical plan, this immediate apprehension of God emerges from its obscurity and becomes half-clear" and at last, in transforming union (St. Teresa's "seventh mansion") "reaches the maximum of clarity and intimacy it can attain in this life." 107

About this theory many readers have asked themselves the question that Father Heris clearly formulated :108 In the formal object, is there a difference between the obscure natural intuition of God and that supernatural experimental knowledge of Him proceeding from the gift of wisdom ? We do not see this distinction. This seems to be admitted by the claim that obscure natural intuition of God attains to Him immediately, not only as it is not,108 but positively, yet without apprehending Him as He is in Himself *(sicuti est).* The double distinction between "obscure" and "half-clear" and between the latter and "clearly distinct" does not constitute a distinction of nature such as the difference between the natural and the supernatural order demands. Here we need to apply the universal and inflexible Thomistic principle that faculties, habits, and acts are specified by their formal objects.

We make a distinction between obscure, half-clear, and clearly distinct knowledge in the natural order. A man of common sense knows rational principles obscurely; a young student of philosophy has a half-clear knowledge of them; a metaphysician of St. Thomas' genius apprehends distinctly

i°" *Ibid.,* p. 66.

108 Revue des Sc. phil. et théol., October, 1924, p. 612.

109 Op. cit., p. 50.

their ontological value, absolute necessity, universality, and relative subordination. Yet no matter how great a genius the metaphysician may be, his natural knowledge can never grasp even obscurely the formal object of either faith or the gift of wisdom. Nor can any other creature, however perfect, man or angel, succeed where he fails. The distinction of order here depends on the distinction of formal objects. This principle might be called the theme or *leitmotiv* of the second part of the *Summa: potentia, habitus et actus specificantur ab objecto formali.*[110]

If we would avoid falling into the errors of the ontologists, and ultimately into pantheism itself, we must realize that, although faith belongs essentially to the same order as the beatific vision because it adheres to supernatural mysteries, human reason and angelic intellect do not. The ontologists failed to see this. For them man's intellect naturally attains, even if only obscurely, to the same formal object as the beatific vision, an opinion leading to pantheism through a confusion of the human intellect with the divine.[111] Infused faith and the gift of wisdom are not only supernatural *quoad modum,* in the mode of their production, but also *quoad substantiam,* by their very nature, as specified by their formal

110 Cf. IIa IIae, q.5, a.3. Thomists have never admitted the active obediential capacity required, it seems, by Father Picard's view of our nature as the "pierre d'attente pour des apports de grace" *(op. cit.,* p. 47).

To Thomists such an active obediential capacity would be at one and the same time essentially natural, as a property of our nature, and essentially supernatural, as a positive inclination specified by a supernatural formal object—a metaphysical monstrosity. Cf. John of St. Thomas, in Iam, q. 12, disp. xiv, a.2, no. 11, and Billuart, *De Deo,* diss, iv, a. 5.

As John of St. Thomas remarks, *"Parvus error in principio magnus est in fine."* A small error in defining the supernatural and the relations between the natural and the supernatural can take us far astray. If our nature already has an active obediential capacity specified by the formal object of infused faith or of charity, there is apparently no further necessity for supernatural virtues.

111 This question has been studied at length in *De revelatione,* II, 337, 344-404.

object. The resurrection of the dead entails the supernatural restoration of natural life; but sanctifying grace, faith, and charity, and the gift of wisdom belong to an essentially supernatural life, which fits us for an essentially supernatural object.

It is to be regretted that Father Picard did not treat of the key problem about the intuition of God, that is, the distinction between nature and grace. By nature, man's intellect first apprehends neither himself nor his God but the being of sensible things.[112] In a criticism he makes of our views on the subject, Father Picard seems to be ignorant of St. Thomas' opinion on man's first intellectual apprehension as well as the chief difference between St. Thomas' ontological realism [113] and both nominalism and conceptualism.[114] At all events, for St. Thomas certainly, man's intellect is not a faculty for die divine in the sense that his first intellectual apprehension attains immediately and obscurely to the divine, to God Himself. If it did, man's intellect would be specified neither by the being of sensible things nor by being in general but by God Himself. Its formal object would differ not a whit from the formal object of faith; and, as a result, man's will would not be immediately specified by the universal good but by God Himself and would have the same formal object as infused charity, or, at the very least, of hope. Of the soul itself we would have to say what we now teach of sanctifying grace: that it is a real and formal participation in the divine

113 Cf. Ia, q.84, a.7; q.85, a.8; q.87, a.2 ad 2um; q.88, a.3.

113 Ia, q. 85, a. I, ad mm.

114 Although, for lack of time, the author has not answered this criticism specifically, it is met by his work, *God: His Existence and His Nature,* I, no ff. Cf. also L. Noël, "Le riel et l'intclligence," *Revue Neo-scolastique,* February, 1925, p. 22; and Maritain, *Reflexion sur l'intelligence* (Paris: Nouvelle Librarie Nationale, 1925), pp. 342-45; *Three Reformers,* tr. (New York: Scribner, 1929).

nature. Thomists have always jealously defended the distinction between nature and grace against any trace of naturalism. One of St. Thomas' greatest glories is that he marked out clearly the limits of these two orders by the great principle that faculties and acts are specified by their formal object. So universal is this principle that, should it fall, the whole of Thomistic doctrine would go down with it; the distinction between the intellect and the external and internal senses would disappear, together with the proofs for the spirituality of the soul; and we would revert to radical nominalism, the lineal forefather of contemporary positivism; the way would be immediately opened also to naturalism and pantheism, for it would no longer be evident that the natural powers of intellectual creatures cannot attain to the formal object of the divine intellect. No wonder St. Thomas so treasured this principle, confirmed 115 in modern times by the Council of the Vatican.110

116 Cf. *Contra Gentes,* Bk. I, chap. 3; Bk. III, chap. 50; *Summa,* Ia, q. *12,* a.4; *De veritate,* q.8, a. 3.

Condi. Vatic., Denzinger, 1795, 1816.

CHAPTER IV

Love of God and the Mystery of the Cross

The mystery of the cross throws open to us vait perspectives i that add width and depth to our knowledge pf God and of ff Christ, as well as to our understanding of sin. The cross offers I us the clearest and most impressive evidence of God's love I fdr the supreme good, which is Himself, for His incarnate t Son, and for our souls. It tells us, too, not only of His love £ for good, the basis of all duty, but also of His hatred for v evil, and of the need for reparation to re-establish the order I of justice.

Moreover, incredible as it may seem at first, it speaks to us Îof God's great love for the Word made flesh. Jly sending Christ to ignominious death on Calvary, the Most High; willed to have Him gain a hidden victory façjsurpassiug His triumph over death on "the day of His resurrection- a victory * without parallel, ^"overthrow of sin and Satan.^Lastly^the cross makes known to us God's love for our souls, since He delivered up His only Son that we might be saved. The better to grasp this truth, we now wish to consider the Savior's pas-

1 Cf. the *Summa,* la, q.20, a. 4: "God loves Christ not only more than He loves the whole human race but more than He loves the entire created universe: because He willed for Him the greater good in giving Him a name that is above all names, inasmuch as He was true God. Nor did anything of His excellence diminish when God delivered Him up to death for the salvation of the human race; rather did He become thereby a glorious conqueror. The government was placed upon His shoulder, according to Isa. 9: 6."

sion as the supreme manifestation of the plenitude of grace He received at His conception in view of His universal mission as Redeemer.

One of the most mysterious and at the same time most revealing aspects of Christ's passion ishhe union of terrible suffering with that great peace'He experienced in consummating His redemptive work—the two perfectly united extremes of His whole interior life.2 We can learn a lesson from our Master here:-how, in union with Him, we ought to "preserve peace and abandonment to God in the midst~oFour worst_trialsi When we have to undergo not only sharp and prolonged physical pain but moral suffering as well, and are left to ourselves with little human help, and even without apparent aid from heaven, we nearly always fall into discouragement and seem about to lose all courage and hope.

Rare are the souls that, in hours of profound sadness, preserve perfect abandonment to God and the peace which can come to us only from Him. First in rank among these heroic souls and far above all the rest, stands the holy soul of the Word made flesh, so strengthened by the superabundant grace received at its coming into the world as to suffer much and to be ever at peace.

ARTICLE I

our lord's fullness of grace and ardent DESIRE FOR THE CROSS

From the first instant of its creation and union with the body formed in Mary's virginal womb, the holy soul of Christ

2 This is the fundamental idea of Chardon's beautiful book, *La croix de Jésus,* written before the controversy between Bossuet and Fénelon.

received a fullness of created grace proportionate to it? personal union with the Word; for the nearer we are to God, the more light and life we receive from Him, just as the closer we come to a fireside the more light and warmth it gives us.

The personality of the Word made flesh

As created, Christ's soul was and will always be more united to the Word of God than any other creature could be: it constitutes one and the same person with Him, since it exists by the uncreated exigence of the Word.[3] No more intimate or indissoluble union of two infinitely distant natures can be conceived: they are one not merely because of an accidental union by way of knowledge and love but through a substantial union by way of being itself, since, without becoming confused, the divine and human natures really belong to the uncreated person of the Word made flesh in such a way that in Christ there is no human pe£sonality, no human "I," but only the "I" of the Word of God.

Our Savior's humanity loses nothing because of this, but acquires a peerless perfection found faintly reproduced in the lives of the saints. The more the saints grow in the love of God the more, in a sense, they lose their human personality. In their union with God they become independent, as it were, of everything created and rise above the natural condition of men of their country and time so that they may guide human generations toward the life of eternity; they oppose hatred of self to disordered self-love; they abandon their own ideas for the thoughts of God received through faith ; they turn their wills from egoism to love of God until, although they are but[8]

[8] IIa, q. 17, a. 2.

human beings still, they can exclaim with St. Paul: "I live, now not I; but Christ liveth in me."[4]

The faculties of Christ's soul, too, are thus transformed and deified. His intellect is ruled and enlightened in all its ideas and judgments by divine truth. Supereminent charity guards His will from any egoism. The highest degree of sanctifying grace has been engrafted into His soul's very essence. Yet, above and beyond all this, at the very root of His faculties and the soul itself, exists no human self, no human person; in its stead reigns supreme the very self of the Word made man. The Word, who possesses from all eternity with the Father and the Holy Ghost the infinite and indivisible divine nature, has also intimately and forever assumed our human nature, a body and a soul like ours. Christ can truly say: "I am the way and the truth and the life,"[5] not merely, "I have received truth and life," but "I am the truth and the life." And as truth is being, only He who is being itself could so speak. "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham was made, I am."[6] "No one knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither doth anyone know the Father, but the Son and he to whom it shall please the Son to reveal Him."[7] "I and the Father are one."[8]

So close is this incomparably intimate union of natures that the personality of the Word acts as the radical principle of all the human operations of Christ; in Him, the Word of God knows by a human intellect, wills by a human will, speaks, suffers, and dies for us.

4 Gal. *2: 20.*
5 John 14:6.
6 8: 58.
7 Matt. 11: 27.
8 John 10:30.

Christ's fullness of grace

It follows that, because Christ's soul is nearer the source of all grace than any other soul or any other spirit, it has evidently received more light and more love; it has received an absolute plenitude of created grace proportionate to the dignity of the Word made flesh and to the universal mission of the Savior of humanity.[9] Every divine mission demands holiness proportionate to the task; if all too often in the government of human affairs the incapable and the improvident occupy high positions to the detriment of the governed, no equal disorder or disproportion can prevail in those God Himself has directly and immediately chosen for an exceptional divine work. A supereminent divine mission demands supereminent sanctity. The soul of the Savior, already sanctified by personal union with the Word, must have received such an intensive and extensive fullness of grace that from it grace could overflow upon all mankind and give life to all generations. Of Christ, the constituted head of the Church, St. John can say: "And of His fullness we all have received."[10]

The special graces received by the great servants of God form them chiefly for the accomplishment of their missions. Together with His mission as universal Redeemer, Priest, and Victim, the fullness of grace was unquestionably bestowed on Christ. As soon as His soul existed, its ardor for the cross was born. As St. Thomas says: "God the Father did deliver up Christ to the passion; ... by the infusion of charity, He inspired Him with the will to suffer for us."[11]

9 Illa, q-7, a.9-13.
10 John i: 16.
11 Illa, q.47, a.3.

Christ and His Cross

That our Savior was ever moved and inspired by the sacrifice of the cross, we learn not only from theology but from a far higher source—the revelation spoken by His own mouth. In the Epistle to the Hebrews St. Paul wrote that, in coming into the world, Christ said: "Sacrifice and oblation [of the blood of bulls and of goats] Thou wouldst not; but a body Thou has fitted to Me. . . . Behold I come . . . that I should do Thy will, O God." 12 This act of oblation Christ unceasingly renewed during the course of His life and expressed again in Gethsemane, saying: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." 13 He was ever moving on toward the end of His redemptive mission. Even His anguish before the impending cross could not weaken His efficacious desire to be fully faithful to His mission of priest and victim. The desire prevailed and came to realization in the *Consummatum est.*

We can regard our Lord's ardent thirst for our salvation as the soul of His apostolate. Although some modernists maintain that St. Paul's genius invented the idea of the sacrifice of the cross, which was foreign to Christ's preaching, we know that He was continually voicing it, not only in the form given us by St. John, but in the varied ways preserved in die first three Gospels.

In the Gospel according to St. Matthew,14 Jesus says: "The Son of man is not come to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ranson for many." 15 And in one of

12Heb. 10:5-7.
13 Matt. 26: 39, 42.
14 Cf. Mark io: 45; Luke 1: 68; 2: 38; 21: 28.
15 Ibid., 20: 28.

His most beautiful parables He tells us: "I am the good shepherd; and I know Mine, and Mine know Me. As the Father knoweth Me, and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for My sheep. . . . And there shall be one fold and one shepherd. Therefore doth the Father love Me; because I lay down My life that I may take it again. No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again. This commandment I have received of My Father." 16

The same thought recurs again and again in His preaching. "I am come to cast fire on the earth. And what will I, but that it be kindled? And I have a baptism wherewith I am to be baptized. And how am I straitened until it be accomplished!" 17 He speaks here of that most perfect baptism, baptism of blood. 18 19 And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all things to Myself." Which He said, adds St. John, to signify by what death He was to die. 18

When unable to bear Christ's foretelling of His passion, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying: "Lord- be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee," our Lord answered: "Get behind Me, Satan; thou art^^scandal unto Me, because thou sâvorest not the things that are of ?jpd^ but the things that are of men." "^ Indeed, the human thoughtsof PÊTér at that moment piOtested against the very mystery of redemption and the whole economy of our salvation.

Our Lord's thoughts and desires were ever turning to the

18 John io: 14-18.
17 Luke 12: 49 f.
18 Illa, q.46, a. 12.
19 John 12: 32.
20 Matt. 16: 22 L

cross, which He held out to us all as the one way of salvation. As St. Luke relates: "And He said to all: If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: for he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it."[21] And as it is recorded elsewhere: "And whosoever doth not carry his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple."[22] The sons of Zebedee He challenged with the words: "You know not what you ask. Can you drink of the chalice that I drink of, or be baptized with the baptism wherewith I am baptized?"[23]

Again, in the upper room, the night before the Passion, Christ expressed His great desire to accomplish His mission as priest and victim by instituting the Eucharistic sacrifice, identical in substance with the sacrifice of the cross. As St. Luke records: "And He said to them: With desire I have desired to eat this pasch with you before I suffer. For I say to you that from this time I will not eat it, till it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. . . . And taking bread, He gave thanks and brake, and gave to them, saying: This is My body, which is given for you. Do this for a commemoration of Me. In like manner, the chalice also after He had supped, saying: This is die chalice, the new testament in My blood, which shall be shed for you."[24]

Upon going out of the Cenacle to walk to Gethsemane, He continued speaking His thoughts: "The prince of this world cometh; and in Me he hath not anything. But that the world may know that I love the Father; and as the Father

21 Luke 9: 23 f.
22 *Ibid.*, 14: 27.
23 Mark 10: 38.
24 Luke 22: 15-20.

hath given Me commandments, so do I. Arise, let us go hence."[25] As St. Thomas remarks in his commentary on this passage of St. John's Gospel, Jesus obviously so speaks by His Father's inspiration, which made Him desire to die for us out of love and obedience. And as He nears Calvary, His words grow in clarity: "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends."[26] And in the sacerdotal prayer: "Father, . . . sanctify them in truth. . . . And for them do I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth."[27]

As St. John says: "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."[28] In other words, we members of our Lord's mystical body should have a more or less perfect participation in His fullness of grace.

The decree of redemption embraced the cross and all that the cross entailed as the consummation of Christ's work and destiny as priest and victim. By being personally united to the Word and constituted head of the Church, Christ's soul contracted an obligation to satisfy for mankind. The head had to rectify the disorder of its members. Our Lord's fullness of grace disposed Him for the perfect accomplishment of His mission and acted as a magnet drawing Him toward the cross and making Him desire it ardently for our salvation.

Pondus Crucis et Pondus Gloriae

Louis Chardon's clear and masterly treatment of this doctrine shows that the grace of Christ acts as the principle of

25 John 14: 30 f.
26 *Ibid.*, 15: 13.
27 *Ibid.*, 17: 17.
28 I John 3: 16.

two forces or weights, which draw Him, so to speak, in contrary directions: the attraction of glory[28] and the pull of the cross. Even on Thabor our Lord thought more of offering Himself for us than of anything else and, when He spoke with Moses and Elias, He talked about the Passion.

Plunged in the divine essence and absorbed in the fullness of eternal happiness, . . . Christ would not allow His spirit to rest in the joy that filled all His faculties. The divine torrent might go so far as to reach even His garments, yet He withdrew from it, turning His thoughts to the whips, the thorns, the.nails, the shameful death that lay ahead. . . . He looked through the deifying and deiform light of beatitude to rest His eyes on the cross ahead and He longed for the terrible sufferings of His passion; for the satisfactions of eternal glory could not slake His thirst to suffer.

Two extremes presented themselves to His mind: glory and dishonor; the life of blessedness and shameful death ... at a time when He tasted the one and had no experience of the other. Nevertheless grace so drew Him to pay the debt of our ransom that beatitude could not move Him.

No joy, not eternal glory itself, could distract Christ's mind from the cross which held sway over all His faculties. Hence the lower part of His soul was not inundated by the effects of the Transfiguration, even though it did share, by divine Providence and through a kind of reflection, in the glory of that mystery. The attraction of the cross was so strong that Thabor was less in the mind, the love, the heart, of the transfigured Christ than Calvary.[30]

28 II Cor. 4: 17.

80 *La croix de Jésus,* 1st cd., pp. 40 f. Copies of the original text being extremely rare, lengthy extracts from it can be found in Bremond's *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France,* VIII, 30. The revised text of Chardon's work has lost some of the savor and strength of the original.

The same idea is beautifully expressed in De Montfort's *L'amour de la divine sagesse,* Part II, chap. 5, which deals with the triumph of eternal wisdom on the cross and by the cross.

God willed the Incarnation chiefly as redemptive. Drawn by the same motive Christ ardently desired to fulfill perfectly His mission as Redeemer.

The motive of the Incarnation

We enter into what is most intimate and primordial in Christ's life when we seek to know the motive of die Incarnation. "Mercy" is the best answer to our *why,* for the Incarnation was motivated most of all by mercy for sinning and unhappy humanity. Misery calls for mercy. Mercy exists because of misery.[31] Mercy is, as it were, so characteristic of God, that through it He best teaches us of His power and goodness, as He so strikingly shows us when He lifts us up from mortal sin and gives us back the eternal treasure of His infinite life.

Often God gives more through mercy than He would have given through simple liberality, as we see from the conversion of Magdalen and the good thief, and in truth, from the ransom of all mankind.

Certainly an opinion exists which holds that the Word would have become incarnate even if man had not sinned. But, St. Thomas remarks: "Since everywhere in the Sacred Scriptures the sin of the first man is assigned as a reason for the Incarnation, it is more in accordance with this to say drat had sin not existed, the Incarnation would not have been."[32] In other words, mercy motivated the Incarnation, as the *Credo* tells us: *"Qui propter nos homines et propter nostram salutem descendit de coelis et incarnatus est."* "For God so loved the world as to give His only begotten Son; that whosoever

81 Ha Ilae, q.30, a. 2.
82 Illa, q.i, a. 3.

believeth in Him may not perish, but may have life everlasting." [33]

Insistence on this point will easily resolve difficulties raised by those who maintain the contrary opinion. Their arguments come to this: the superior cannot be ordered to the inferior, but this is just what would happen if the Incarnation were ordered to our redemption. According to St. Thomas, mercy brings the superior down to the inferior, not, of course, to become subordinated to him, but to raise him up and to restore and magnify the primitive order, the original harmony. The Word, by becoming incarnate, by bending down in mercy to sinning humanity, in no way subordinates Himself to humanity; rather does He wonderfully manifest His omnipotence and goodness by subordinating humanity to His Father, to Himself, and to the Holy Ghost. From all eternity, the divine Mercy has willed the Incarnation as redemptive: *"Ratio miserendi est miseria."* [34]

Another aspect of this great mystery demands consideration. Since God can permit evil only in vieyv^ofa^greater ^ood, it must be said that He permittecT original sin onlyinTiew of the redemptive Incarnation, a supreme manifestation of mercy, wherein all the rights of justice are at the same time safeguarded. As St. Thomas says: "There is no reason why human nature should not have been raised to something greater after sin. For God allows evils to happen in order to bring a greater good therefrom; hence it is written (Rom. 5: 20) : 'Where sin abounded, grace did more abound.' Hence, too, in the blessing of the paschal candle, we say: 'O happy

83 John 3: 16.

84 As St. Thomas so often says, *"Omnis res est propter semetipsam operantem."* Every being is for its operation, or better, operates for itself and ultimately for God. Christ was willed by God to be the Savior of men.

fault, that merited such and so great a Redeemer.' "[35]

And therefore Jesus Christ is before and above all, not King or Doctor or Prophet or Wonder Worker, but Savior and Victim. In His predestination this role is not something secondary, superadded accidentally as a result of the first man's sin; it is primordial. By the will of God, Christ was first and foremost the Redeemer, the victor over sin, Satan, and death.[36] So, at any rate, St. Thomas thought, and many theologians with him, all believing themselves the possessors of the true meaning of Scripture. If they are right, then we can see how fundamental and predominant in Christ's life was His desire to save us, to suffer for us on the cross.

His hour

No one need wonder then why Christ so often spoke of His hour, the hour of His passion, His great hour. Divine Providence had infallibly determined it from all eternity, and before it came His enemies could do nothing against Him. He spoke of it as an approaching certainty which in no way violated or necessitated either His own freedom or that of His executioners.[37] The nearer this hour approached, the more urgent became His warnings to His disciples. At

35 See the exposition of this doctrine given by the Carmelites of Salamanca, Godoy, Gonet, who seem to have given the best interpretation of St. Thomas' doctrine concerning the motive of the Incarnation, applying to the mystery the principle, *causam ad invicem sunt causae in diverso genere.* In other words, there is a mutual interdependence between the Incarnation, in view of which God permitted original sin, and original sin itself, from which the divine mercy willed that we be delivered by the redemptive incarnation of His Son. Cf. Ia, q.23, a.5, for the application of the same principle to predestination. In both instances causes operate upon each other mutually but from different points of view.

33Ia, q.20, a.4, ad rum.

37 Cf. St. Thomas, *Commentary on St. John* 2:4: "My hour is not yet come." Sec also John 5:25, 28; 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27! *3: B 25=2› 4› 2I› 32› 17:1; Mark 14: 41; Luke 22: 53.

Gethsemane "He taketh Peter and James and John with Him, and He began to fear and to be heavy. And He saith to them: 'My soul is sorrowful even unto death.' " [38]

No contradiction lies in this. Our Lord did not negate His ardent-desire to suffer for us and to accomplish perfectly His mission as victim. He was not just a little inferior to those martyrs who have experienced no equal sadness in the face of death: like St. Ignatius of Antioch, for example, who longed to be ground by the teeth of beasts that he might become the wheat of Christ. After the holy ardor of His oblation, our Savior willed to be overwhelmed with grief, and, that He might offer a perfect sacrifice, to suffer for our sakes that mortal sadness and terror a man naturally experiences in the face of such a death. He also willed to leave us an example for our own hours of overwhelming sorrow. His sadness was not an emotion which preceded and troubled the judgment of right reason and the consent of the will; on the contrary He willed to become sorrowful that His holocaust might be perfect.[39] Instead of hardening Himself stoically against suffering and proudly denying its existence, Christ surrendered Himself to it voluntarily for our salvation. Of His life He says: "No man taketh it away from Me; but I lay it down of Myself. And I have power to lay it down; and I have power to take it up again." [40]

He willed each and all of His sufferings, the crowning with thorns, the scourging, which reduced His whole body to one great wound, the torture when His robe was put on Him

88 Mark 14:33; Matt. 26:38.

89 Cf. *Summa,* Illa, q. 15, a.4, 5, 6, 7; also q.46, a.6, 8, where St. Thomas quotes St. John Damascene's famous dictum that Christ's divinity permitted His body to do and to suffer in accordance with its nature.

40 John 10: 18.

again and adhered to His wounds, the flaming of His whole body into vivid pain when the soldiers tore it off for the crucifixion. Being offered as a holocaust for us, He willed, too, to be nailed to the cross, to suffer from the priests of the Synagogue whose mission it was to recognize the coming of the Messias, to suffer from Judas, who betrayed Him, to suffer from His people, who acclaimed Him on Palm Sunday and forsook Him so shortly after, to suffer from Peter, who denied Him, the disciples, who deserted Him, the crowd that mocked and blasphemed Him.[41]

He willed to go still farther. After taking our sins upon Himself, He willed to suffer in our stead the curse due to sin; becoming as St. Paul says, "a curse for us."[42] An expiatory victim, He felt the terrible justice of God weighing upon Him. Isaias, contemplating the Passion with the very eyes of God, prophetically foretold: "But he was wounded for our iniquities; He was bruised for our sins. The chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and by His bruises we are healed. . . . And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. . . . And the Lord was pleased to bruise Him in infirmity. If He shall lay down His life for sin, He shall see a long-lived seed; and the will of the Lord shall be prosperous in His hand."[43]

Our Lord's fullness of grace brought Him even to this extremity that His mission as Redeemer and Victim might be realized. If almost all the saints have desired martyrdom, if St. Ignatius of Antioch longed to be ground by the teeth of beasts, what must have been Christ's desire for the cross! He

41 Illa, q.46, a.5. St. Thomas says that, generically speaking, Christ endured every human suffering.

42 In his commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians 3:14. St. Thomas says that Christ became a curse for us by dying for us and taking on Himself the curse due our sins.

43 Isa. 53: 5, 10.

willed not only to experience through grace a holy enthusiasm for His oblation, but also, as a victim literally bruised in our stead, to know mortal sadness and anguish, offering it all for us with a love so pure and intense that it could be found nowhere else but in the heart of God. "Surely He hath born? our infirmities and carried our sorrows." 44

ARTICLE II

THE PASSION AND PEACE OF CHRIST

In mortal sadness, in entire forsakenness, in that desolation expressed in the twenty-first Psalm, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me ?" 45 Christ kept perfect mastery over Himself, complete abandonment to the divine will, and a profound peace that found expression in His last words.

The Seven Words

Peace is the tranquillity of order, and order is restored b^ the cross. -which reconciles sinning humanity to God. Nowhere can we find an expression of greater peace than in the last words of the dying Christ, spoken for His executioners, for die good thief, for Mary and John, for us all: "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." 40 "Amen I say to thee: This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." 47 "Woman, behold thy son."48 "Behold thy mother."49 "I thirst." B0 "It is consummated."51 "Father, into Thy hands

** *Ibid.,* v. 4.
45 Matt. 27:46; Mark 15:34.
48 Luke 23:34.
47 Ibid., v. 43.
48 John 19: 26.
49 Ibid., v. 27.
80 Ibid., v. 28.
61 Ibid., v. 30.

I commend My spirit."[52] These words, which we ought to repeat daily, are our Lord's testament whereby He restored peace to our souls. Those He spoke last of all offered and consecrated the sacrifice of the cross at the very moment of its immolation.[53]

Calvin sought to find an expression of despair in the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?"; but, on the contrary, these are plainly the inspired words of the first verse of Psalm 21, the Messianic psalm, which came to the lips of our dying Lord and have an unquestionable significance. They utter a cry of sorrow and then make an act of perfect confidence and pure love. In saying them, Christ thought of our blindness and prayed for us. To be convinced of this, we have only to reread Psalm 21:

O God, my God, look upon me: why hast Thou forsaken me? O my God, I shall cry by day, and Thou wilt not hear: and by night, and it shall not be reputed as folly in me." This is the supplication of a victim, who adds immediately: "But Thou dwellest in the holy place, the praise of Israel. In Thee have our fathers hoped . . . and Thou has delivered them. . . . But I am a worm, and no man: the reproach of men, and the outcast of the people. . . . Depart not from me. For tribulation is very near: for there is none to help me. Many calves have surrounded me, . . . the council of the malignant hath besieged me. They have numbered all my bones. And they have looked and stared upon me. They parted my garments among them: and upon my vesture they cast lots. But Thou, O Lord, remove not Thy help to a distance from me; look toward my defense. Deliver me from the lion's mouth: and

[52] Luke *23:* 46.

[53] A recent opinion holding that the sacrifice of the cross would not have been a true sacrifice if it had not been preceded by the sacramental oblation at the Last Supper, cannot be admitted. When Christ died on the cross, not only was He immolated but He also offered Himself to the Father for us.

my lowness from the horns of the unicorns. I will declare Thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the church will I praise Thee. Ye that fear the Lord, praise Him; all ye seed of Jacob, glorify Him . . . because He hath not slighted nor despised the supplication of the poor man. Neither hath He turned away His face from me: and when I cried to Him He heard me. With Thee is my praise in a great church. . . . The poor shall eat and shall be filled: and they shall praise the Lord that seek Him: their hearts shall live forever and ever. All the ends of the earth shall remember, and shall be converted to the Lord: and all the kindreds of the Gentiles shall adore in His sight.

The Messianic psalm that welled up to the lips of the dying Christ obviously expresses no despair; the first verse simply cries out the deep sorrow of a victim bearing on Himself the curse due to our sins. Our Lord willingly shouldered this anguish that He might deliver His loved ones from its burden and, by the same act, pay His tribute of adoration to the sovereign Justice that punishes sin.[54]

As to the other seven words, martyrdom has spoken none stronger, none more beautiful. They spoke the peace of Christ; they bestowed the peace of Christ; and those who stood around His cross were strengthened for that terrible trial they shared with Him. St. Augustine says that the beatitude of the peacemakers corresponds to the gift of wisdom, the principle of contemplation. Never on earth were such heights of contemplation reached as those Christ experienced on the cross.

"Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." This was said for His executioners at the very moment when they crucified their own Savior, a word to be repeated by

54 Cf. St. Thomas, *Commentary on St. Matt.* 27: 46.

St. Stephen and many other martyrs, a word that plainly distinguishes the true martyr from the false, since it rises not from obstinacy but from strength companioned by exquisite meekness and perfect charity.

Of like character is the word spoken to the good thief, promising him the peace of heaven at once: "This day thou shalt be with Me in paradise." And no other are the words of balm poured into the aching hearts of Mary and John. "Woman, behold thy son." Then did Mary become more than ever the mother of all men represented in John, and the mediatrix and dispenser of all graces. "Son, behold thy mother." And from that moment John loved the Mother of God with the deep and reverent love of a son.

After the first words of Psalm 21, Jesus added "I thirst" and "It is consummated." At the very moment when He thirsts for souls, He Himself was bringing them the living waters of grace. There is more joy in giving than in receiving. He had the boundless joy of consummating the work of redemption by a perfect holocaust, reconciling sinners to God, giving peace to all who would accept it, and eternal life to all those who would not, through their own fault, refuse to receive it.

Surely the peace of the sacerdotal prayer pervades the last word, "Father, into Thy hands I commend My spirit." By it, the sacrifice of the cross was consecrated. All things were restored in God. Divine peace returned to the world, and the love of God flowered again in the hearts of men.[55]

55 Illa, q.47, a.3, St. Thomas explains the words, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" by saying that Christ said them while hanging on the cross because His Father had left Him to the power of His persecutors, as St. Augustine says (Ep. cxl), and he adds (ad turn): "It is indeed a wicked and cruel act to hand over an innocent man to torment and to death against his own will. Yet God the Father did not so deliver up Christ, but inspired Him with the will to suffer for us. God's severity (Rom. n: aa) is thereby shown, for He would

In His last discourse our Lord had promised to give us peace.66 Dyings He kept His promise. His words express not defeat and desperation, but victory over sin and Satan. So mysterious was His triumph, however, that very few around the cross recognized it—Mary and John, some faithful women, a repentant thief, and a Roman officer. Three days later another more striking though lesser triumph, bound to the first by transcendent logic, made the earlier victory manifest. Christ showed His supremacy over sin itself by vanquishing the fruit of sin, death. Only the mouth that said, "I have overcome die world" 87 could pronounce, "It is finished."

Peace in anguish

One of the most sublime aspects of the mystery of the redemption, an object of study for theologians and of contemplation for mystics, is the union of deep sorrow and perfect peace in the dying Christ. Theologians and mystics alike generally agree that this intimate union of seemingly opposed sentiments is both a miracle and an essentially supernatural mystery: a miracle, in virtue of which Christ was at one and the same time *viator et comprehensor,* a traveler toward eternity who already possessed eternal life; a mystery essentially supernatural, because the two extremes united here, greatest peace and deepest sorrow, are, like grace and

not remit sin without penalty: and the Apostle indicates this when (Rom. 7: 32) he says: 'God spared not even His own Son.' Likewise His goodness (Rom. 11: 22) shines forth, since by no penalty endured could man pay Him enough satisfaction: and the Apostle denotes this when he says: 'He delivered Him up for us all': and again (Rom. 3:25): 'Whom—that is to say, Christ—God hath proposed to be a propitiation through faith in His blood.' " Concerning St. Augustine's explanation of these words, cf. G. Joussard, "L'abandon du Christ d'après saint Augustin," *Revue des Sciences phil. et theol.,* July, 1924.

5β John 14: 27.

67 *Ibid.,* 16: 33.

charity, both supernatural, and, as *a* result, their union also is essentially supernatural, and thus inaccessible to the natural powers of any human or angelic intellect. The coexistence of states apparently so contrary requires some clarification, although during our lifetime this union must always remain somewhat incomprehensible to us, hidden by light too strong for our weak eyes.

In attempting to explain this mystery, some theologians have fallen into contradictions. They extenuate or disfigure its truth in one of three theories now to be stated and discussed.

Certain theologians, like Aureolus, have held that, during the Passion, Jesus suffered only in the sensitive part of His soul, and not in its purely spiritual part.[58] But, as the Carmelites of Salamanca remark,[59] this opinion goes contrary to the common doctrine of the Fathers founded on Scripture, according to which Christ suffered from the sins of all men, an evidently spiritual suffering. Like contrition, such sufferings belong not to the sensitive part of the soul, which man shares in common with animals, but to the will, and all the more so as the will is elevated and animated by supernatural charity, the love of God and of souls in God. The ordinary magisterium of the Church teaches this doctrine plainly.[60]

A second entirely different theory was proposed by Melchior Cano, Velantia, Salmeron, and Maldonatus. According to them, our Lord did not will to preserve during the Passion the beatific joy that normally originated at the summit of His

58 For this opinion sec Capreolus, *In 111 Sent.,* d.16, q. I, a. 2.

59 Cursus theologicus, in Illam, q.9, a. 2, *de scientia beata Christi.*

60 This teaching rests on the definitions of the Third Council of Constantinople against the Monothelitcs. These definitions establish the distinction between our Lord's uncreated will and His human will, without which He would not have been really man.

soul because of the vision of the divine essence. This second theory conflicts with what St. Thomas says,[81] and, as Gonet notes, it appears to contain a contradiction. It seems impossible that the Sovereign Good, God seen face to face, could be possessed by an intellect and proposed to a created will without the latter experiencing immense joy. If our Lord did have the vision of die divine essence during the Passion, He had, too, at the highest point of His soul, the joy which comes from that vision.

Théophile Raynaud proposed a diird theory: that sovereign beatitude and deepest sorrow, even if contrary can coexist miraculously in the same soul. But, as Gonet says,[82] equal contrariety implies contradiction; and this obtains if, at the same time, the same will is made both deeply glad and deeply sad by die same object. Even by a miracle, God cannot do anything contradictory. Almost all theologians admit that the union of deepest sorrow and perfect beatitude in our Lord was miraculous, a result of His being at the same time *viator* and *comprehensor,*™ so that in Him the glory of the beatific vision did not overflow into the lower part of the soul. To recognize a miracle, however, is not to concede a contradiction.

Since these three theories are evidently insufficient, let us turn to St. Thomas and his principal commentators for an understanding of this union of sentiments apparently so opposed.[83] We shall find that the tradition preserved by them gives us a much nobler and more comprehensive view. St.

81 IIIa, q.46, a. 8.

82 *Clypeus thomifticae theologiae, in IIIam,* q.9, a.2.

83 IIIa, q.15, a. 10.

84 Cf. IIIa, q.9, a.2; q.46, a.7; q.84, a.9, 2 ob.; and sec Cajetan, Salmanticcnses, Gonet, on these articles.

Thomas is not one to minimize; he does not make little of the mystery in any way. First of all, he establishes the fact that even during the Passion Christ enjoyed the beatific vision and, as a result, perfect beatitude; and that, on the other hand, His sorrow far surpassed all the suffering endured by men in the present life. The solution to this enigma St. Thomas sees in our Lord's will to suffer for us. His will prevented His beatitude from overflowing into the relatively inferior part of His spiritual soul and into His sensibility.

The cross and the beatific vision

St. Thomas firmly believes that all during the Passion, Christ's soul possessed the immediate vision of the divine essence. Our Lord's fullness of grace overflowed in three ways: in a very high knowledge of God and of His kingdom, in love of God, and in love of souls. This twofold love was at the same time the principle of Christ's perfect peace and of His profound sorrow at the sight of men's sins.

For a better understanding of this doctrine, let us recall its dogmatic foundations, all too little known. At our Savior's conception, the fullness of grace He received flooded His intellect as the light of glory. He more than believed in His divinity. He saw His own divine personality, and the divine essence, from which His personality is not distinct. The common teaching of the Fathers and of theologians[85] holds that with the first moment of life Christ enjoyed the vision possessed by the blessed in heaven. Their view rests upon the words of the Gospel, and to dissent from it would be to err almost to the point of heresy.®[8]

85 Illa, q.9, a.2. Cf. on the same, Cajctan, John of St. Thomas, Gonet, the Carmelites of Salamanca.

88 On June 7, 1918, the Holy Office forbade the teaching of the following proposi-

"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him."[67] Evidently these words mean that, unlike the prophets, who had not seen God, die only Son had seen Him, inasmuch as the Son was in the bosom of the Father, and saw God not only by His divine intellect, but by His human intellect as well. As man, the Son made known the Father; as man also the Son saw the Father. Testimony and the knowledge from which it springs should surely correspond.

When talking to Nicodemus about spiritual regeneration, our Lord said: "Amen, amen, I say to thee that we speak what we know, and we testify what we have seen. . . . And no man hath ascended into heaven but He that descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven."[68] In these words "what we know" is synonymous with "what we have seen." The "speaking," the "bearing witness" that Christ refers to here, He certainly did as man: as man also then He saw God, not by the knowledge of faith but with that vision the blessed in heaven possess. And, as at the time He was speaking the souls of the just already dead were awaiting entrance into heaven, He added: "And no man hath ascended into heaven but He that hath descended from heaven: the Son of man who is in heaven." Christ was already in heaven not only as the Son of God, by reason of His divinity and His divine intellect, but as the Son of man, through His human intellect; not only would He be in heaven after His death and resurrection, but He was already there; even then, by His human intellect, seeing God face to face, without any in-

tion: *"Non constat fuisse in anima Christi inter homines degentis, scientiam, quam habent beati seu comprehensores."* Cf. Hugon, O.P., *De Verbo incarnato,* p. 212.

67 John 1: 18.

68 Ibid., 3: 11-13.

termediary. As tradition says, He was at the same time *viator* and *comprehensor,*™ traveling toward eternity and already home and in possession of eternal life.

St. John the Baptist told our Lord's disciples the same truth: "You yourselves do bear me witness that I said that I am not the Christ, but that I am sent before Him. . . . He that cometh from above is above all. He that is of the earth, of the earth he is, and of the earth he speaketh. He that cometh from heaven is above all. And what He hath seen and heard, that He testifieth ; and no man receiveth His testimony." 70

Not only the friendly Nicodemus but even the contentious Jews at Capharnaum were told: "Everyone that hath heard of the Father and hath learned cometh to Me. Not that any man hath seen the Father; but He who is of God, He hath seen die Father. Amen, amen, I say unto you: He that believeth in Me hath everlasting life."71 A little later the Pharisees as well heard: "It is My Father that glorifieth Me, of whom you say that He is your God. And you have not known Him ; but I know Him. And if I shall say that I know Him not, I shall be like to you, a liar. But I do know Him and do keep His word." 72 Finally, in the sacerdotal prayer, when praying for His disciples, Jesus again says: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; diat they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me, because Thou hast loved Me before die creation of the world."73 These last words are particularly expressive: "where I am,"

69 Illa, q. 15, a. IO.
70 John 3: 28-32.
71 *Ibid.,* 6: 45–47.
72 *Ibid.,* 8: 54 £-
73 *Ibid.,* 17:24.

that is, in heaven; those who have been given to Christ already have supernatural faith; He asks the beatific vision for them, the vision of the divine essence and of the glory He has been given as man. "Now this is eternal life: that they may know Thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom Thou hast sent." 74

St. John die Apostle surely understood the Savior's words in this sense when he wrote: "Dearly beloved, we are now the sons of God; and it hath not yet appeared what we shall be. We know that when He shall appear we shall be like to Him; because we shall see Him as He is." 75 Then will be granted the sacerdotal prayer of Jesus: "Father, I will that where I am, they also whom Thou hast given Me may be with Me; diat they may see My glory which Thou hast given Me." 78 The more we contemplate the literal meaning of these words, the more we grasp, in the obscurity of faith, the truth that, even in this life, our Savior possessed the light of glory.

St. Thomas gives a sound reason of congruity for this prerogative of our Lord. He says that since in this world Christ, the Master of teachers, apostles, and doctors, was entrusted with bringing mankind to eternal life, that is, to the vision of God, He Himself should see God even in this life. To give we must first have. If we would dispel darkness, we must possess light; if we would warm others, we must provide heat. It was eminently fitting, then, that the Master should possess the vision of heaven so that He might lead men to see God.77 If St. Paul, called to become the Doctor of the Gentiles, was

74 *Ibid.*, v. 3.
75 I John 3: 2.
78 John 17: 24.
77 Illa, q-9, a.2.

caught up to the third heaven and "heard secret words which it is not granted to man to utter,"[78] with how much greater reason should Christ, the Savior of mankind, have had evidence of the supernatural mysteries about which He taught us!

Widiout the beatific vision our Lord would have remained in the order of faith; for only through faith would He have known His own divine personality, a thing seemingly contrary to His dignity as Son of God. If the fullness of grace received by Christ's soul at His conception surpassed the grace of all saints and all angels combined, we must say as much of His knowledge of divine things. In consequence of die personal union of Christ's soul with the Word of God, and of the fullness of created grace flowing from that union, it was highly fitting that His human intellect be lifted up in this life to the divine vision, in a degree proportionate to His supereminent charity which, from the very first, surpassed that of all the just together.

Had our Lord not enjoyed the vision of God in the first but only in the following moment of His existence then, in this subsequent instant, grace and charity would have increased in Him. Yet the Second Council of Constantinople teaches that Christ *non melioratus est*™ "did not become more perfect," did not grow in charity, but received an absolute plentitude of charity from the first instant of His life on earth.

St. Thomas did not believe[80] we can admit that our Lord lost the beatific vision during the Passion, giving several reasons for his judgment. First of all, the beatitude constituted by this vision is inamissible by its very nature. Well named "eternal life," it is not touched by time but shares in the

78 II Cor. 12: 4.
79 Dcnzinger, no. 224.
80 Illa, 9.46, a.8.

immutability of eternity.[81] Our Lord never lost it even in sleep because it required no concurrence of the imagination. Besides, Christ possessed the beatific vision as the normal result of the hypostatic union and of His fullness of grace. Certainly in the Passion, no grace was lost to Him; indeed it so filled Him as to overflow more than ever upon all men. Lastly, even on the cross and above all on the cross, Christ continued to be the Master of masters in the things of eternity, incomparably superior to the greatest contemplative raised to the most sublime union. While speaking from the height of His cross to Mary, to John, to the good thief, to us all, Christ was seeing God; in this unparalleled light He pronounced the seven words, and, as Bossuet says, "the light He received without measure He gave to us with measure, that our weakness might be able to bear it."

The vision of the divine essence, of God's sovereign goodness, was not, therefore, lost to our Lord on the cross, and even then it gave Him happiness that nothing could trouble or lessen. No soul can see God face to face without loving Him and without experiencing, at least in the highest point of the will, the joy that necessarily comes from the possession of the Sovereign Good.

Before the Passion our Lord revealed to His disciples the secret of His peace, of that tranquillity of order founded on the knowledge and love of God. "Peace I leave with you; My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth do I give unto you. Let not your heart be troubled; nor let it be

81 Ia IIae, q.5, a.4. As this article says, a cessation of the beatific vision would presuppose God's withdrawal of the light of glory, a thing conceivable only as a punishment for some fault. Christ was without fault, being even in this world incapable of sin because of His divine personality and in virtue of the beatific vision which, once possessed, makes it impossible for the soul to turn from God.

afraid."[82] "Behold, die hour cometh, and it is now come, that you shall be scattered every man to his own and shall leave Me alone. And yet I am not alone, because the Father is with Me. These things I have spoken to you that in Me you may have peace. In the world you shall have distress. But have confidence. I have overcome the world."[83]

Charity effects peace by subordinating all our affections to the love of God above all filings and establishing in us the tranquillity of order.[84] During His life on earth, Christ's charity surpassed that of all the saints, and it was exercised to the greatest degree during the Passion and on the cross; and while He was in torment He was not content to preserve His own deep peace, but He gave peace to those about Him who were most deeply grieved, whom He sustained and strengthened—Mary, John, the holy women, the good thief. He was the true peacemaker, reconciling the world to God. From His cross comes the peace given by all the absolutions of nineteen centuries. From His cross comes the peace procured through every Mass to the end of time. The peace of the Crucified can make every desolation sweet, every weakness strong.

The sufferings of Christ

Our Lord cannot be said to have endured every possible suffering. Some sufferings naturally preclude others. A man cannot both drown and be burned to death. Besides, Christ's body never knew sickness and remained in perfect health up to the time of the Passion. St. Thomas maintains[85] that

82 John 14: 27.
88 Ibid., 16:32 f.
84 IIa IIae, q.29.
85 IIIa, q.46, a.5.

our Lord did, however, endure for our salvation every kind of suffering that can touch us in this life. If we consider the men who made Him suffer, we find that affliction came to Him from the Jews, the Gentiles, the chief priests, the people, the disciples, Judas, from Peter himself. If we consider what was taken from Him, He suffered in His heart by being abandoned by His friends; He suffered in His body by being stripped, scourged, crowned with thorns, and crucified; He suffered in transfixed hands and feet; He suffered in His soul, sad unto agony and unto death.

The Passion, adds St. Thomas,[86] was the greatest agony endured by any man in the present life, and that for many reasons: because of the violence and general character of these sufferings; because of the fineness of our Lord's constitution; because Christ willed to give Himself up fully to pain of body and grief of soul without seeking any alleviation; and, above all, because of the principal cause of these afflictions, the sins of all men.

Christ's body, conceived miraculously in the virginal womb of Mary, was endowed with a keen sensibility augmented, if we may so express it, by the exceptional penetration of His intellect. The sufferings of the scourging, of the crowning with thorns, of the crucifixion, of the pierced hands and feet, on which the whole weight of His body rested, could not have been more bitter or more terrible. As regards His interior sorrow, all the sins of mankind were its chief cause. The Savior had to satisfy for them—sins without number, sins the gravity of which Jesus realized more than anyone else, sins that made Him suffer in the measure of His love for an out-

86 *Ibid.*, a. 6.

raged God and for sinners.[87] Lastly, our Lord's physical and moral agony was more intense than any martyr's because no joy, no consideration of the higher reason, and no distraction mitigated or sweetened it, because Christ willed to give Himself up fully to pure suffering, to go to the last limits of sacrifice: those of love.[88]

The objection has been made that the greater the good lost, the greater the sorrow. It is said, for example, that a sinner by losing sanctifying grace is deprived of a greater good than the life of the body which our Lord lost on the cross, and that, therefore, he knows greater desolation than that known by his Lord. The repentant Peter is cited as an instance.

To this St. Thomas makes answer: "Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all grief of every contrite heart, both because it flowed from a greater wisdom (by which He saw better than anyone else the infinite gravity of mortal sin) and a greater charity (love of an offended God and of those who offend Him) by which the pang of contrition is intensified, and because He grieved at the one time for all sins, according to Isaias 53: 4: 'Surely he hath carried our sorrows.' "[89]

Only a great contemplative can penetrate deeply into the richness of these sober words. We catch a suggestion of what they contain by thinking of those who have offered themselves as victims for some sinner and have sometimes had to suffer terribly for his sins, in order to detest them in his stead and with the intention of obtaining for him the grace of conversion.

M Ibid.
ss *Ibid.*
88 Ibid., ad 4un>.

Christ had to suffer not only for a few sinners, but for thousands and thousands of all peoples and generations, and for all their sins at the same time. The chalice of Gethsemane brimming with all the iniquities and infamies of the whole world He took for Himself, and gave us instead the chalice of His precious blood, offered daily on the altar. These two chalices, like the scales of a balance, represent the whole history of humanity, all the evil on one side and all the good on the other: "And where sin abounded, grace did more abound." [90]

If St. Catherine of Siena was sickened and nauseated at seeing the interior state of certain prelates' souls, what must our Lord have suffered at the sight of the sins of all men! The suffering that sin caused Mary at the foot of the cross can be measured only by her love. To know what she suffered we would have to realize how much she loved her offended God and His crucified Son, how much she loved our own souls, so ravaged by wrongdoing. Plainly, we cannot compass her secret or her suffering. What then can we know of her Son's? The fullness of grace and charity in our Savior sharpened and deepened His capacity for suffering. Our egoism makes us live on the surface of ourselves so that we are dull to evil but quite alive to whatever wounds our sensitiveness and pride. Christ's suffering, like His peace and happiness, had its origin in His plenitude of grace. Between these two extremes of perfect peace and unparalleled sorrow lies the whole interior life of Christ in this world. St. Thomas offers us some measure of understanding of this mystery which contemplation will help us to penetrate more and more deeply each day.

90 Rom. 5: 20.

The union of peace and sorrow

St. Thomas in no way makes little of the divine obscurity in this mystery. The difficulty that our minds encounter he formulates thus: "It is not possible to be sad and glad at the one time, since sadness and gladness are contraries. But Christ's whole soul suffered grief during the Passion. . . . Therefore His whole soul could not enjoy the beatific vision."[91] The holy doctor[92] answers with a principle expressed by St. John Damascene that has become classic: *Divinitas Christi permisit carni agere et pati quae propria:* "The divinity of Christ allowed His body to act and to suffer according to its nature."[93] And, inversely, the agony of the Passion did not prevent the highest part of Christ's soul from experiencing the joy proper to it because of the immediate vision of the divine essence.

In this world our efforts to explain supernatural things achieve only partial success. St. Thomas has indeed penetrated profoundly into this mystery. With certainty, yet in the obscurity of faith, he sees the truth and shows it to us.[94] He first answers the proposed difficulty with an abstract, wholly metaphysical consideration of the very essence of the soul. This serves as a preparation for a more concrete solution, reached through a consideration of the faculties.

We must distinguish, he says, between the essence of the soul and the total of the faculties which proceed from it. The essence of the soul is indivisible; and, as a result, it is whole in the entire body it informs, animates, or vivifies, and whole

91 IIIa, q.46, a. 8, I ob.
92 *Ibid.*
93 *De fide othodoxa,* Bk. III, chap. 15.
94 IIIa, q.46, a. 7, 8.

in each part of the body, although by the head it exercises much higher functions than by the other parts. If, therefore, we consider the very essence of the soul of Christ, we can and should say that Christ suffered in His whole soul, for He suffered in all the parts of His body and in His different faculties that were affected by such grievous objects. "For my soul is filled with evils." [95]

For the same reason, that is, because of its essential indivisibility, the soul is the complete subject of each of its faculties. We can, therefore, say that Christ, even during His passion, rejoiced in His whole soul so far as His soul was the subject of His higher faculties, and the vision of the divine essence beatified the summit of those higher powers.

But to speak more concretely, following St. Thomas' trend of thought:[90] if, on the other hand, we no longer consider the essence of the soul but its different faculties in relation to the objects toward which they are directed, then we see that, during the Passion, the vision of the divine essence beatified only the highest point of Christ's human intellect and human will; whereas the lower part of these higher faculties and all the sensitive faculties were plunged in agony at the sight of the sins of men and the torments of the Passion.

If, therefore, by the expression "the whole soul" we understand no longer the essence of the soul but "all its faculties," we cannot say that Christ was beatified in His whole soul; for the glory which shone on the summit of His higher faculties was not reflected either in their lower part or in His other, sensitive faculties. Our Lord freely willed that these be abandoned to sorrow, without seeking any alleviation for it

95 Ps. 87:4.

98 In fact the soul knows, loves, joys, and suffers only through its faculties.

in the vision of the divine essence. Our Savior's humanity was like a mountain peak crowned with sunshine and hemmed in by calm blue heavens, the while, far down the mountain side, below the clouds, a raging storm seems to devastate everything. Such in substance is the doctrine set forth by St. Thomas in his *Summa theologica*.[97]

A superficial reading of these two articles has led some to misunderstand St. Thomas, believing that, according to him, our Lord suffered only in the inferior part of His soul during the Passion, and by these words, "inferior part of His soul," they understand only the sensitive part. Aureolus, not St. Thomas, holds this opinion, already refuted as contrary to Scripture and to the ordinary magisterium of the Church.

That Christ suffered especially from the sins of men, St. Thomas himself clearly asserted a little earlier in the *Summa*. "Christ grieved not only over the loss of His own bodily life, but also over the sins of all others. And this grief in Christ surpassed all the grief of every contrite heart, because it flowed from a greater wisdom and charity, by which the pang of contrition is intensified." [98] Suffering experienced at seeing God offended and souls lost, plainly belongs, like contrition, not to the sensitive part, but to the purely spiritual part of the soul, to the will that loves and desires spiritual good, and even to the will as elevated by grace and charity. The suffering essential to contrition is not only spiritual but supernatural, for it has its immediate source in the supernatural love of God and is proportionate to that love.

The question arises whether Christ suffered from the sins of men in the highest part of His soul, in the summit of His

97 nia, q.46, a.7 ct 8.
98 *Ibid.*, a.6, ad 4111ŋ.

higher faculties, *in ratione superiori.* Scotus and Suarez think that He did. In several works[89]*St. Thomas teaches, on the contrary, that our Lord did not suffer because of sin *in ratione superiori,* at the highest point of His mind ; there He possessed the Sovereign Good seen face to face and loved above all things, as do the blessed in heaven, who no longer suffer because of sin, although they are displeased by it, as is God Himself.[100]

We need not conclude that St. Thomas was of the opinion that the great suffering our Lord experienced at the sight of men's sins pertained only to His lower reason. Cajetan [101] seems to preserve the real thought of his master when he says that it belonged to the lower reason of Christ directed by His higher reason. According to the terminology of St. Augustine, what is called the "lower" reason has to do with temporal things, and sin is a temporal thing. However, the sadness a just man experiences at the sight of sin comes from "the higher reason" which contemplates the eternal law of God.[102] Sin makes the just suffer chiefly inasmuch as it is an offense against God.

It would, then, be a gross error to say that Jesus suffered only in the sensitive part of the soul, which is common to man and animal alike; He suffered from the sins of all men in the purely spiritual part of His soul, even in those high regions of His mind that are enlightened by the principles of the highest

89 *III Sent.,* d.15, q.2, a.i; d.3, a.3, q.2; *Compendium theologiae,* cap. 232; *De veritate,* q.26, a.9, ad 711m; Illa, q.46, a.7, c ct ad 2um; *Quodlibet* VII, a.5.

100 Illa, q.46, a.7, c: "But Christ's higher reason did not suffer on the part of its object, which is God, who was the cause, not of grief, but rather of delight and joy, to the soul of Christ." *Ibid.,* ad 211m: "On the part of its proper object . . . Christ's higher reason did not suffer."

101 Cf. Cajetan, *In Illam,* q.46, a.7, no. vi.

102 Cf. Cajetan, *ibid.*

wisdom. However, He did not suffer in the very peak of His mind beatified as it was by the sight of God seen face to face, by the possession of the Sovereign Good. This peak is called the summit of the soul, the *apex mentis,* in relation to the sensible faculties regarded as inferior; the mystics sometimes also use another metaphor for it, calling it the depth of the soul, the *fundus animae,* in relation to the sensitive faculties and sensible things considered as external.

Sin causes no suffering to the saints in heaven although it displeases them, for they see the victory of mercy in regard to forgiven sins and the splendor of justice in the punishment due to other sins.[103] Even in this world, on Calvary, Christ saw this victory and this splendor. Nevertheless He experienced untold suffering at the sight of sin, for He was at the same time *viator* and *comprehensor,* both a traveler toward eternity and a possessor of eternity, one of the blessed. In other words, He freely prevented the irradiation of the light of glory on His lower reason and sensitive faculties, not wishing the radiance of this light and its consequent joy to sweeten in any way the sadness that assailed Him from every side.[104]

Theologians generally regard this inner state of Christ as no less miraculous than His sudden stilling of the storm on the sea of Galilee. According to the natural laws of life, joy in the higher part of the soul reflects on the lower, and inversely, the suffering of the latter has its echo in the highest part. Christ voluntarily and freely worked a miracle that He might give Himself up to sorrow, just as He freely willed

Summa, la, q. 113, a. 7.

104 Cf. St Thomas, *Compendium theologiae,* cap. 232.

to bring back to life Lazarus and the son of the widow of Naim.[105]

In the natural order perfect happiness and profound grief cannot coexist in one person. Only a miracle could bring them together in an entirely exceptional, unique union, the result of the incarnation of the Word in passible and mortal flesh. No one claims that Christ was saddened and made glad by the same object under the same aspect, a manifest contradiction. In reality, He suffered from His passion inasmuch as it was contrary to His human nature and effected by the world's greatest crime; He rejoiced in it so far as it was ordered as an expiatory sacrifice for the salvation of man and therefore pleased God.[106]

In somewhat the same way, a true penitent, while sorry for his sins and saddened by them, may find much joy in his own contrition since it proceeds from love of God.[107] St. Augustine says in his book *De poenitentia: "Semper doleat poenitens et de dolore gaudeat:* Let the penitent be ever sorry for his sins and let him find joy in his sorrow."[108] In His higher reason, Jesus took joy in His passion, for it pleased God that our Lord's suffering and death should ransom humanity. The apostles mirrored their Master when "they went out from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they

105 IIIa, q.46, a.8, ad autn; the Carmelites of Salamanca, *Cursus theol., de Incarnatione,* disp. XVII, dub. iv, no. 47.

108 St. Thomas, *De veritate,* q.26, a.9, ad 7um; *Compendium theol.,* c.232; *Summa,* IIIa, q.46, a.8, ad turn.

107 Cf. IIa, q.84, a.9, ad 2um, where St. Thomas shows at greater length than elsewhere how joy and sadness of the sensible order cannot coexist in the same subject, since joy expands the heart and sorrow contracts it, whereas joy and sorrow as spiritual acts of the will have no parallel bodily repercussion and therefore exclude each other only if they concern die same aspect of the same subject.

108 Chap. 13.

were accounted worthy to suffer reproach for the name of Jesus." 109

Our Lord, therefore, suffered chiefly because of men's sins, and His suffering surpassed that of all contrite hearts, because of the superiority of His knowledge and love. He saw incomparably better than we can the gravity of mortal sin and He knew the number of men's offenses. Immeasurably more than we, He loved both Him whom sin offends, God His Father, and our own souls, which die of sin.

God permits sin only in view of a greater good. In this life, even during His passion, Christ contemplated this higher good: the victory of mercy and the splendor of justice: the supreme victory of the Sovereign Good over sin, Satan, and death.110 Therefore the divine and holy permission for sin caused the higher reason of Christ no suffering. What we have been contemplating in Christ is both miracle and mystery and lies beyond the laws of nature and the ordinary laws of the order of grace.

More and more clearly we can see that the fullness of grace in our Lord produced two apparently contrary effects that were like the two poles of His interior life: the vision of God bound Him to eternal life, desire for the cross drew Him on to the mortal agony of death that He might be a perfect holocaust.

The harmony within our dying Lord

In our Lord, these two effects originated in the same radical source, His fullness of grace; and, in a more proximate way, they proceeded from His charity, from the intensity of His

109 Acts. 5: 41.
110 la, q.2O, a-4, ad turn.

love for God and souls. Here we have the secret of their intimate union.

To love God above all things is to have peace, for, as St. Augustine says, peace is nothing but the tranquillity of order, the wonderful harmony of all sentiments and all desires completely subordinated to one supreme love, which ought to have first place in our hearts.[111] Love of God burned so ardently in Christ's soul that He could bear and even forget His physical suffering. On the other hand, this very love added to His suffering.

Sin is the practical denial of the Creator's infinite goodness. Christ realized this fully and saw how many times men would attempt, as it were, to wrest from God His dignity as their last end merely to gain some miserable, momentary satisfaction. And because He loved the Father so intensely, this knowledge caused him terrible suffering.[112]

Our Lord experienced such peace in suffering because of His love for God and also because of His love for us. On the cross He certainly knew boundless joy in saying, "It is con-

111 Cf. IIa IIae, q.29, a.3: "Whether peace is the proper effect of charity?" See also, *ibid.,* q.28, a. 1, where St. Thomas says that both joy and sorrow proceed from love but in contrary ways. "For joy is caused by love, either on account of the presence of the thing loved or on account of this, that the proper good of the thing loved exists and endures in it; and the latter is chiefly in the love of benevolence, whereby a man rejoices in the well-being of a friend though he is absent. On the other hand, sorrow arises from love cither on account of the absence of die thing loved or on account of this, that the loved object to which we wish well is deprived of its good or afflicted with some evil. Now charity is love of God, whose good is unchangeable, since He is His goodness, and from the very fact that He is loved, He is in those who love Him by His most excellent effect, according to John 4:16: 'He that abideth in charity abideth in God, and God in him.' Therefore spiritual joy, which is about God, is caused by charity."

112 *Ibid.,* q.28, a.2: "The joy of charity whereby we rejoice in the divine good as participated by us . . . can be hindered by anything contrary to it; wherefore, in this respect, the joy of charity is compatible with an admixture of sorrow, so far as a man grieves for that which hinders the participation of the divine good either in us or in our neighbor, whom we love as ourselves."

summated." There is, indeed, more joy in giving than in receiving, in loving than in being loved; and the more precious, lasting, and immortal our gift is, the more joy there is in sharing it with others. Now, in dying for us, Christ merited eternal life for us all, bringing back to us the stream of divine mercy. He told us He came that we might have life, and have it in abundance; surely He experienced great joy in giving Himself up for us. "Greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends," [113] He said; and from the height of the cross He seemed to repeat the words: "If any man thirst, let him come to Me and drink. He that believeth in Me, as the Scripture saith: Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' "[114] Since that time the Sacred Heart has never ceased saying to us: "Only in the heart of a God will souls find ease for their sufferings and strength for their weakness; let them stretch out their hands to Me, I Myself will lead them to that heart."

On the other hand, Christ suffered in proportion to His charity for men and the gravity of their sins, which He had taken upon Himself to expiate. He knew sin as the destroyer, the death of souls, the way from God to abysmal misery, misery as inexpressible as the glory of which it is the privation. The thought that some souls would not profit from the sacrifice of the cross, however infinite and superabundant its value, made our Lord suffer in the measure of His love for us, a love so great that the hearts of all saints and angels together could not hold it.[115]

113 John 15:13.

114 Ibid., 7: 37 f.

115 The famous melody of the Grail, the holy cup which legend says received the blood from Christ's pierced heart, attempts to express this infinite supernatural wealth. An unknown artist of the Middle Ages composed the melody at the time when the great cathedrals of Europe were being built. It was an Amen accompani-

The desire of dying for us on the cross was always alive in the heart of Christ, even on Thabor at the moment of the Transfiguration. As St. Luke relates, "And whilst He prayed, the shape of His countenance was altered, and His raiment became white and glittering. And behold two men were talking with him. And they were Moses and Elias, appearing in majesty. And they spoke of His decease that He should accomplish in Jerusalem." [116] A little while later,[117] Jesus again prophesied His sorrowful death to His disciples.

The fullness of grace in Christ was, then, the source of His perfect happiness and intense suffering. In the seventeenth century Louis Chardon, O.P., made this sublime thought the soul of his masterpiece, *La croix de Jésus.* He says:

> The same unction of grace [118] is both a principle of joy and a source of sadness for our Lord. If, on one hand, it disposed His soul to enjoy the perfection of eternal happiness, on the other, it filled His powers to overflowing with untold suffering. He was anointed for immortality; He was also anointed for death. . . . Of old, men used two kinds of oil, one for feasts, the other for the burial of the dead. The soul of Jesus was anointed with both kinds of oil: with festal oil because of His beatific love, and with burial oil because of His love for justice. . . . He had an unction to make Him impassible; He had an unction to make Him susceptible to suffering. He received the oil of glory and He received the oil of the cross.

A little while before his martyrdom, Polyeuctus expressed the same great thought.

ment, whence its name *Amen-Dresden.* Both Wagner in his *Parsifal* and Mendelssohn in his *Reformation* repeat the melody although it is not theirs but comes from a higher source, seeming to belong to the genius of Christianity, as though heard in ecstasy and composed under divine inspiration.

[118] Luke 9: 29-31.

[117] *Ibid.,* v. 45.

[118] *La croix de fésus,* Ier entretien, chap. 11 to the end.

God alone do I adore, God alone
The Master of the universe, before whose throne
Heaven and earth and hell must bow;
Whom love led here for love to die,
Sharp-limned in shame against His own wide sky;
Who, still unsatisfied with giving, stays till now
With us—the same dying, deathless victim as when
First offered as the homely bread of men.[118]

Seen from without, this mystery, like a stained-glass window, appears unintelligible and almost contradictory; seen from within, in the right light, by those who understand it a little by living it, it expresses the divine harmony of mercy and justice, of strength and gentleness, of deepest suffering and that peace which will shine undimmed throughout all eternity.

The lesson of Calvary

Fortis est ut mors dilectio. "Love is strong as death." What is particularly striking in Christ's love, whether for His Father or for our souls, is the close and wonderful union of deepest tenderness with heroic strength in suffering and death: *Fortiter et suaviter.* Our love sometimes lacks one of these qualities. Neither can survive long without the other.

119 Corneille's Polyeuctus, speaking elsewhere of earthly pleasures, says:

Source délicieuse, en misères féconde,
Que voulez-vous de moi, flatteuses voluptés?

Before Corneille, Richard of St. Victor had remarked in his work *De quatuor gradibus violentae caritatis* how the contraries, joy and sorrow, are at times united. This union may range from the abnormality of perversion all the way up to that true antithesis realized on the cross, the bitter source of a wealth of delight. The liturgy expresses this for us by singing

Te adorandam, te crucem vivificam,
Per te redempti, dulce decus saeculi,
Semper laudamus, semper tibi canimus:
Per Lignum servi, per te sumus liberi.

Without strength, tenderness becomes languid and affected; without sweetness, strength grows bitter and harsh.[120]

No one can know how Christ loved His Father. If He loved the Virgin Mary tenderly, how much more He must have loved His Father, to whom He rendered unceasing adoration and thanksgiving! Supernatural tenderness has always flowed out from Him to empty itself upon souls, not merely on those of one country or time, on a restricted group of a few friends, but on the souls of all generations that all may have life eternal.

Christ's love, while tender, is stronger than death, stronger than sin, stronger than the spirit of evil. It led our Lord to offer Himself as a victim in our stead, to save us, by satisfying for us, by giving God an infinite reparation. *Cor Jesu, fornax ardens caritatis:* in that heart all the tenderness and energy of love are wonderfully blended; for the heart of the Savior is a pure mirror of mercy and justice, the two great virtues of the uncreated love of God.

Members of the mystical body of Christ should participate in His life more and more so as to become like unto Him. The sacred humanity of our Savior communicates to us progressively the graces it merited for us on the cross. The head of the mystical body pours out its riches on its members. Our Lord desires to assimilate us more and more to Himself, by baptism, absolution, frequent Communion, the crosses or purifications necessary for our advancement, at the last by extreme unction and up until our entrance into heaven. The lives of many of the saints show this progressive assimilation

120 See Chardon, *La croix de Jésus,* chap. 8, where he shows that God wills the tenderness of His creatures so that He may unite it with His own divine strength and work its transformation.

by a sort of reproduction of the mysteries of Christ's life—first His childhood and hidden life, then His apostolic life, and, at last, His sorrowful life or passion.[121]

One of the great marks of the spirit of Christ in souls is the reproduction of those two effects that have their origin in His own inner life and flowed from His fullness of grace. The first is peace, the tranquillity of order, the more and more perfect subordination of every sentiment and desire to the love of God and of souls in God, a love ever growing by the actual influence of Christ.

The second is acceptance of the cross in order to follow the Master, as He has bidden us to do. We must accept the cross with patience, otherwise our burden increases but bears no fruit; with thankfulness, for it is a hidden grace, as those who bear its weight will find out; with love, for, in any cross, Christ crucified comes to us, to reproduce in us His own traits. Love like this brings abandonment and peace, and offers for our discovery the true wisdom, divine contemplation.[122]

In commenting on St. Paul, the austere Louis Chardon makes some profound statements:

> A reverential consideration of Christ's energetic and insatiable longing for the cross gives us a great deal of light on His disposition of crosses among those souls who belong to Him by the bonds of grace. ... We understand, too, that the more closely souls are united to His spirit, the greater the obligation they contract to suffer. ... It would be a disorder in grace and against the laws of

121 See the encyclical *Miserentissimus Redemptor,* June, 1928, in which Pope Pius XI speaks of the reparation due to God for the sins of all men.

122 Cf. De Montfort, *L'amour de la divine sagesse,* Part II, chap. 6: means of obtaining divine wisdom: (1) ardent desire; (2) continual prayer; (3) mortification in all things; (4) a true and tender devotion for the Blessed Virgin.

love for delicately bred members to be united to a head pierced with thorns. . . .

The same grace that has its universal source in Christ sanctifies His members. His grace as head is communicated to Him for the purpose of His office, which is to satisfy the strict justice of God for the sins of His members. Consequently He contracted the loving obligation to suffer, the cause of that mighty attraction which constantly bore Him on toward the cross. Of necessity, then, grace produces the same propensity in predestined souls and makes the same demands of them, that the mystical body may not seem an entirely monstrous whole in the order of grace, which it would indeed be if the spirit of Christ were contrary to itself—altogether otherwise in the members than in the head . . .

In its original source, the soul of Christ, grace produces an attraction that relates to the end for which He was made man. Overflowing upon men's souls, the grace of Christ necessarily effects the same disposition in those made worthy to receive it.[123]

By its essence grace is a participation in the divine nature, but, so far as it is transmitted to us by Christ, it has a special modality which configures us to Him, an effect of the grace of Christ as such. This St. Thomas teaches when he asks whether sacramental grace, and, in particular, baptismal grace as such, adds anything to the grace of the virtues and the gifts as possessed by Adam before die fall.[124]

Louis Chardon rounds out St. Thomas' thought with the teachings of men like Tauler and St. John of the Cross.

Because this kind of grace cannot be idle in a soul . . . it hungers for growth and, because it cannot receive any considerable increase without the help of crosses, . . . God does not fail to aban-

[123] *La croix de Jésus,* ist ed. pp. 119-21 (Lethicllcux cd.), I, 14, 29, 43, 136; II, 376, 450.

[124] Illa, q.62, a.2.

don the soul to its own weakness and to naked grace, stripped by Him of all its sensible effects. This is done to teach the soul to know itself and to renounce itself and to cleave to Him alone. The closeness and intimacy of its union depend on its separation from everything else.

Whence it comes that the same love is at once the principle of life and of death . . . uniting and separating . . . detaching and binding together. . . . For the holiness of God as communicated to His creatures completely deprives them of all that is incompatible with His immaculate purity.125 . . .

To experience this glorious death . . . is to be rich in divine fruitfulness . . . for in it we find more presence than absence; more union than separation . . . although it is a death more cruel, for all that, than the common way of nature . . . leaving only sad desolation within the soul. Nevertheless those who are well versed in the characteristics of sacred love, and of the end that the good God has in view in all these trials, would not wish to change for a moment their hard martyrdom for the rapturous delights of paradise, or the cruel torments of death for a happy life in glory.126

One historian, who would make amends for the way Chardon's work has been neglected, says: "Never, perhaps, has the separating, simplifying, stripping action of grace been analyzed with more penetration." 127 To see it at work we have only to turn to the life of Mary.128

125 Chardon, *op. cit.,* pp. 125-28.

126 Ibid., pp. 146 f.

127 Bremond, *Histoire Utt. du sentiment religieux en France,* VIII, 43. Whether Chardon had read St. John of the Cross the author cannot say; in any event he drew from Tauler's doctrine and explains it.

128 Chardon, *op. cit.,* shows in the first of his three dialogues how love that demands separation was the principle of the cross borne by the Blessed Mother and the apostles. He has ten chapters of great depth on the interior martyrdom of the Blessed Virgin. In his third dialogue he uses the same great principle to describe the spiritual heights attained by Abraham, Elias, Jacob, Benjamin, the spouse of the Canticles, Martha, and Mary Magdalen. Pages like these show how mystical

Reread slowly the beautiful chapter of *The Imitation of Christ,*[129] "On the Few Who Love the Cross of Jesus," and you will see that the mark of Christ's spirit is peace and abandonment in suffering, peace and abandonment in the anguish of the Passion as reproduced in different degrees in souls for their own purification and for their cooperation in their neighbor's salvation with and by our Lord and through the means that He Himself used. So, in a sense, Christ is in agony until the end of the world in His mystical body, until it is fully purified and glorified, until the word of the Master, "I have overcome the world," is perfectly realized by the final victory over sin, Satan, and death.

When by faith we look with the eyes of God into what the holy liturgy tells us, we see how infinitely it surpasses the sublimest flights of human poetry.

Salve Crux sancta, salve mundi gloria,
Vera spes nostra, vera ferens gaudia,
Signum salutis, salus in periculis,
Vitale lignum vitam ferens omnium.

Crux fidelis, inter omnes
Arbor una nobilis:
Nulla silva talem profert
Fronte, flore, germine:
Dulce lignum, dulces clavos,
Dulce pondus sustinet.

O magnum pietatis opus! Mors mortua tunc est, in ligno quando mortua Vita fuit.

theology is normally the crown and complement of theology itself and was so judged by St. Augustine, St. Thomas, and all the great masters.

129 Bk. II, chap. 9.

Nos autem gloriari oportet in Cruce Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

Crux benedicta nitet, Dominus qua carne pependit, atque cruore suo vulnera nostra lavit.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort provides us with a conclusion for this thought.

In His incarnation, Wisdom incarnate has taken the cross for His treasure and has espoused it with ineffable love. During His whole life, which was nothing but a continual cros^THe sought after it and carried it with unutterable joy. At last He was fixed and, as it were, fitted to the cross; and He died in its dear embrace joyfully, as though it were a couch of honor and triumph. . . . Do not believe that for His greater triumph after death He is now detached from the cross, that He now rejects the cross. . . . Heroes not wish the homage of even relative adoration to be paid to creatures, however great, like His own most holy Mother; this great honor is reserved and due only to His dear cross. On the day of the last judgment He will bring to an end the worship of the relics of the saints, however venerable; but as for the worship of the cross, He will command the first among the seraphim and the cherubim to go out into the world and gather up every piece of the true cross. These, by His all-powerful love, will be so well reunited that they will make but one cross, the very^ross on which He died. He will have thisxfoss carried in triumphby the angels. . . . He~ will have it go before Him anaTseated on a cloud of glory such as eye has never seen, He will judge the world with it and by it. What joy the friends qf the cross_will then know! . . . Wisdom eternal awaitsthat day . . . desiring the cross to be the sign^the"-seal, and die sword of all the elect. He has hidden so many of life's treasures and graces in the cross that He gives the knowledge of it only to those He most favors. . . . (5ià, how humble, little, morti-

fied, interior, and despised we must be to know the mystery of the cross! Whoever carries it shall fincTit an eternal weight of glory in heaven.130

130 *Op. cit.,* Part II, chap. 5.

CHAPTER V

The Love of God and the Mystical Body of Christ

The Church our Lord founded is an external, visible, hierarchical society, in which the supreme authority is vested in the successor of Peter. It is a society commissioned to preserve and propagate tire evangelical doctrine and to sanctify the faithful by the administration of the sacraments, the oblation of the Holy Sacrifice, and the direction of souls. Protestants, who are unwilling to admit the visible hierarchy of the Church, ignore Christ's words: "And I say to thee: that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church. And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." [1] "But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not; and thou, being once converted, confirm thy brethren." [2] After the resurrection Peter was told: "Feed My lambs. . . . Feed My sheep." [3] He was thus constituted the supreme pastor, the vicar of Jesus Christ; and the divine words, "the gates of hell shall not prevail against it," were said for him and for his successors until the end of time.

Although visible in its external aspect, the Church is a spiritual society essentially ordered to the life of eternity; as St. Paul says, it is a mystical body, whose members are united by supernatural life to the Holy Ghost, the soul of the

[1] Matt. 16:18.
[1] Luke 22:32.
[•] John 21: 15, 17.

body, and to Christ, its head, in communion with the souls in purgatory and the saints in heaven. This is one of the most fundamental and sublime doctrines of our holy religion. Let us try to make it more understandable by seeing: (1) what die mystical body of Christ is; (2) how the faithful are incorporated in Christ, what relationship exists between members and head; (3) the nature of the communion of saints, the relationship of the members to one another, and the way all things work together in this body for the advancement of the love of God.

Nature of the mystical body of Christ

The mystical body of Christ, often referred to by St. Paul, shows the resemblance of the Church to our physical body and to a moral body, like the family or nation.*

Our physical body is a group of organs and members animated by one and the same principle, the soul, the highest functions of which are exercised in the head, which sees, hears, directs the members, and transmits neural impulses to die whole organism. The organs really form but one body because they are vivified by the same soul and vitally united with the head. When in old age the organism wears out, we make up for its losses by artificial devices which do not form a part of man's body for they receive no vital influx from it.

In a moral body, like the family or nation, there are also members; they are animated by the same family or national spirit and are banded together under the direction of a leader or head. In a family the father, mother, and children form a whole, all the parts of which are united by ties of blood, affection, common interest, honor, ancestry, name, and re-

* Cf. I Cor. 12: 27; Eph. 4: 15-16; 6: 5.

semblance. These ties act as a vital principle animating the whole. The family truly forms a moral body in which each lives upon the same affection, devotion, and memories—everything that unites them all. Like ties should bind us to our country, for we are its debtors because of its goodness and the benefits of all kinds we have received from it. "Consequently man is debtor chiefly to his parents and his country, after God."[5] True patriotism is the moral virtue of filial piety, which, in the light of supernatural faith and Christian prudence, is, as found in St. Louis and St. Joan of Arc, an infused virtue perfectly subordinated to the love of God and of all men in Him.

The Church forms a still higher body uniting men and nations to bring them into the kingdom of God. This higher body is called the mystical body. Why? Because in the Church the principle that animates the whole is essentially mysterious, infinitely superior to, and infinitely more unitive than the soul of our body or the spirit of either a family or a nation. The soul of the mystical body is the Sanctifier, the Holy Ghost, who dwells in all just souls but exercises His highest functions through the humanity of Christ. The Holy Ghost is the source of grace; He pours charity into our hearts, but always through the soul of our Savior, as an intermediary, for our Savior is indeed the head of the mystical body. The fullness of sanctifying grace received by Christ was ordered, in fact, to die sanctification of all mankind. We enter into this body by baptism, which, by applying the merits of the Savior to us, remits original sin and makes us children of God.[6]

[5] IIa IIae, q. 101, a. 1.

[6] St. Thomas frequently says: *"Christus et Ecclesia est una persona mystica."* Cf. *in Epist. ad Coloss.*, I, lect. 6; *Summa*, IIIa, q.19, a.4; q.48, a.1, a.2, ad 1um; q.49, a.1; q.69, a.2. For the mystical application of this doctrine, see Chardon, *op. cit.*, Ier entretien, chaps. 1-6.

In the mystical body there is great diversity but profound unity: a true harmony. It has the diversity of very different nations and races gathered together by baptism under one Spirit and under one head; St. Paul says: "For in one Spirit were we all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, whether bond or free; and in one Spirit we have all been made to drink. For the body also is not one member, but many." [7] At Pentecost, die apostles miraculously spoke many unknown languages to make it evident that the Gospel was to be preached to all nations in spite of differences of race, customs, manners, and institutions.

It also has diversity of function. St. Paul describes the details of this mysterious body by telling[8] us about the subordinated functions of eyes, hands, and feet. These last symbolize those who, in the vine of the Savior, are dedicated to the active life. The ear cannot say: "Because I am not the eye, I am not of the body." The hand should not wish to perform the function of the eyes. No body can live without diversity of function. If all the members of the human body had the dignity of the eye, the eye itself could not exist.

In this diversity a wonderful unity rules, and ought to become increasingly predominant. All Christians are kinsfolk, brothers, members of the same body. These members are or ought to be united much more closely than those in a human family. Among them there ought to be, as is commonly taught, unity of faith, unity of obedience to the hierarchy, unity of worship, especially through the Mass, unity in the common fare of Communion, and unity of life, since each ought to be nourished by Jesus Christ; unity of sentiments, of

7 I Cor. 12: 13 f.
8 Eph. 4: ii.

affection, of interests that are great and eternal, unity of hope and of charity. Since here all live by grace and later all will live in glory, they have unity of wealth, the merits of Christ, and unity of heritage, eternal life.

As our members form a physical body, so do the faithful united in faith, hope, and charity form the mystical body of our Lord; they are His members; more than that, they are members of one another, too,[9] and help one another like the fingers of one hand.

How incorporation into Christ is effected

Christ said: "I am the vine; you the branches. He that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit."[10] Before the Passion He prayed to His Father, saying: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . . And the glory which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one."[11]

St. Paul,[12] too, said that incorporation into Christ is effected by a kind of engrafting union in which two lives are so intimately mingled that they are lost in each other. In this union the life of the grafted branch is absorbed into the life of the trunk. "If the root be holy, so are the branches. And if . . . thou, being a wild olive, art ingrafted in them, and art made partaker of the root and of the fatness of the olive tree . . . thou bearest not the root; but the root thee."[13]

Christians live a new life; Christ lives in them through faith. He ought to be the principle of their thoughts, of their words,

9 Rom. 12: 5.
10 John 15:5.
11 *Ibid.*, 17: 21.
12 Rom. 6: 5.
13 *Ibid.*, ii: 16-18.

of their acts. Let us see how Christ exercises His functions as head of the Church and how the members of His body are more and more animated by Him.

First of all, Christ exercised His functions as head of the Church by meriting and satisfying for us. The merits of the Savior have an infinite value because He is the Word made flesh; and He has been able to communicate these merits to us in strict justice, because He is constituted head of mankind. As Adam, the constituted head of mankind, could lose the life of grace for us by his sin, so could Christ pour His justice, His sanctity, into our hearts and give us back supernatural life. The substitution of the dying Christ for us is clearly explained in the light of the revealed doctrine that our Savior received capital grace. This constituted Him the head of mankind and was meant to flow out from Him into His members. "And of His fullness we have all received." [14] God, says St. Paul, "hath made Him head over all the Church, which is His body." [15]

Christ still really exercises His function as head or leader of the Church, by interceding for us and by communicating to us the graces He merited for us on the cross. As a living instrument ever united to the divinity, the source of all grace, He communicates His grace to us, just as our head communicates to our bodily members the vital influx that has its principle in the soul. To understand this well, we must distinguish between our Lord's divinity and His humanity.

As die Word, Christ lives in the depth of our soul in the same way as die Father and die Holy Ghost. Closer to the soul than the soul's own self, He preserves its natural and super-

14 John 1:16.
15 Eph. 1:22 f.

natural life; and by operating grace excites it to wonderful hidden acts far beyond its own powers.[16]

The Savior's humanity is, as St. Thomas says,[17] an instrument ever united to the divinity, through which all graces are communicated to us. The sacraments, too, the water of baptism and the sacramental form, for example, are the instrumental physical cause of sacramental grace in the sense that God makes use of the water and the form, communicating to them a divine transitory virtue in order to produce grace:[18] so the humanity of the Savior, especially the acts of His holy soul, are the instrumental physical cause of all the graces we receive, either in the sacraments or outside of them.

A great artist like Beethoven uses an instrument in order to transmit his musical thought to us; a great thinker has his own particular style, a special language that he chooses as a means of self-expression. God, too, has His instruments for the production of effects that are properly divine and can come only from Him. The Savior's humanity is a conscious and free instrument united to the divinity in the production of any and every supernatural effect. The graces Christ merited for us on the cross, He communicates to us. Every illumination of the intellect, every grace of attraction, of consolation, and of strength is transmitted to us by the soul of our Savior. His influence is continual, extending to every salutary act we make, so all-incompassing that a mother's loving influence on her child bears only a dim analogy to it. The beating of the Sacred Heart, the thoughts and desires of Christ's soul, transmit supernatural life to us daily. And as new graces are continually being accorded to souls, Christ's activity never ceases.

16 Ia Ilae, q. 111, a.2.
17 Illa, q. 43, a. 2; q. 48, a. 6.
18 *Ibid.,* q. 62, a. 4.

Our Savior transmits to unbelievers the light of faith, to sinners justifying contrition, to die just persevering charity, to the souls in purgatory the indulgence that is dieir deliverance, and to saints in heaven the glory that is the fulfillment of grace. Throughout the ages Christ has been the light and life of all who live supernaturally, the spiritual sun of souls, shining the same on every generation. He exercises His influence especially through the Sacrifice of the Mass, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated in substance until the end of time. It is a unique sacrifice, not exactly renewed, but continued in substance *{idem nunc offerens},* perpetuated in a way that transcends time and applied to all generations. He is like an inexhaustible source of living water, to which all can and must come to quench their thirst.

But the Savior's influence is not restricted to the Sacrifice of the Mass and the sacraments; it extends to people who do not yet know of the Eucharist, of baptism, of absolution. Not one of them is entirely removed from the influence of the Word made flesh. From Christ even the most degraded people receive supernatural lights and actual graces that are ordered to salvation.[19] Christ indeed, as head, exercises an unbroken influence on His whole body.

Because the Blessed Virgin as coredemptrix merited for us with *meritum de congruo,* all that Christ obtained for us in strict justice, she transmits to us all the graces we receive; she is like the virginal neck uniting head and members, or, as the Fathers called her, the aqueduct of grace. Blessed Grignon de Montfort has given an especially clear elucidation of this doctrine.

Through the influence of Jesus and Mary on the mystical

18 E. Hugon, O.P., *La causalité instrumentale* (Paris, 1924), pp. iioff., 201.

body, its members receive life by progressive sanctification. Baptism gives them the life of grace and blots out original sin by remitting the chief punishment due to sin. Whoever dies immediately after baptism goes directly to heaven; there the soul enjoys supreme beatitude while waiting for the resurrection and glorification of the body. If after baptism the soul falls back into sin, it must acknowledge and repent of its fault to obtain pardon; and if its contrition has intense charity, even the remission of all punishment can be obtained by the appropriation, through love and sorrow for sin, of the merits and satisfactions of Christ Jesus.

The Eucharist, especially, makes us attain to conformity with the will of our Savior. But deliverance from sin, in order to be perfect, and incorporation into Christ, in order to be complete, must follow the three phases of the purgative, illuminative, and unitive life. Before communicating His glorified life to us, Christ first communicates to us the life of grace as He lived it in a world of strife.

We must first, St. Paul says, die more and more to the earthly man and crucify our old self that we may no longer be slaves of sin.[20] "And be not conformed to this world; but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect will of God."[21] "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit."[22] In the exercise of their ministry, the apostles were persecuted, "always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may

20 Rom. *6: 6.*
21 *Ibid.,* 12: 2.
22 Gal. 5: 24.

be made manifest in our bodies." [23] These ideas, repeated in very different ways by St. Paul, comprise one of the fundamental points of spiritual doctrine, and a commentary on the Master's: "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground, die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal." [24]

Thus purified, the Christian must put on the new man [25] and be ever enlightened and renewed according to the image of his Creator. "Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience; bearing with one another, if any have a complaint against another. Even as the Lord hath forgiven you, so do you also. But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." We must imitate Christ and those who resemble Him; we must have His sentiments, assume the spirit of His mysteries, His passion, crucifixion, death, burial, and ascension. So it was that St. Paul suffered the pangs of labor until Christ should be formed in the souls of the faithful, until their souls should be enlightened by the true light of life.

A soul so enlightened and configured to Christ must live in continual union with our Lord. "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God."[26] "And let

23 II Cor. 4: 10.
24 John 12: 24 f.
23 Col. 3: 3-17.
28 Ibid., 1-3.

the peace of Christ rejoice in your hearts; wherein also you are called in one body. And be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you abundantly: in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual canticles, singing in grace in your hearts to God. All whatsoever you do in word or in work, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, giving thanks to God and the Father by Him." [27] "When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory." [28] Thus, each member of Christ should receive supernatural life progressively, advancing in sanctification until he reaches full and perfect maturity.

The communion of saints

One of the principal qualities of a living body is the union and solidarity of its parts. In the human body, each member or organ profits from the activity of the others. The heart could not make the blood circulate if the blood were not renewed by the respiration of the lungs; and respiration itself would be impossible if the heart stopped beating. If one organ functions well, the others, well nourished in their turn, exercise their functions all the better; but if, on the contrary, one member or organ is sick, all the others are affected.

In a moral body we find the same phenomenon verified. Let one member of a family disgrace himself, and the whole family is shamed. On the other hand, a family is overjoyed when one of its own covers himself with glory. This solidarity is straiter in die mystical body of Christ than anywhere else. The communion of saints is a mysterious community of life

[27] *Ibid.,* 15-17.
[28] *Ibid., 4.*

and of interests in virtue of which whatever one member of the Church has and does reflects on all the others.

The principal part of this mysterious communion is the divine intercourse between God and souls through Christ. The Blessed Trinity is the source of all supernatural life, which, like a stream of living water, descends through Christ to all the blessed in heaven, to the souls in purgatory, and to all Christians on earth, making its influence felt even in unbelievers. Then this stream of divine life reascends toward Christ and the Blessed Trinity in the form of prayer, merit, adoration, and thanksgiving.

From the point of view of expiation as well, the sins we have committed have been transferred to our Savior's head, and the full value of His merits has become our property. Each time a sin is pardoned us or a grace is accorded to us, it is done in virtue of our communion with the Saint of saints.

The members have communion with one another, too: they share one another's goods. The saints in heaven intercede for us, and through our veneration receive an accidental glory that is like an added ray in their aureole. We gain indulgences, have Masses said, and offer sacrifices for the souls in purgatory; in return we shall be rewarded for our charity. The deceased father and mother are helped by their children still living in the world, and the Lord blesses this assistance. Lastly, all the members of the Church militant who journey toward eternity together can be of help to one another. The virtues and prayers of one draws the divine mercy upon the other—the tears of a St. Monica obtain die conversion of a St. Augustine.

It must also be recognized that the crimes of the wicked sometimes bring down the effects of divine vengeance upon

the just. An atheistic school prevents a child's mind from opening up to the things of God, provides him with the means of becoming perverted, makes vice easy and virtue difficult for him. For the impiety that promotes and results from such conditions, reparation must be made.

Besides, evil is not found merely in the enemies of the Church ; it seeks to penetrate within. The Church is not only, as certain heretics have believed, a spiritual society of predestined just; it includes sinners even among its ministers. Their sins and the sins of the faithful mar the external features of the Spouse of Christ, as St. Catherine of Siena was told,[29] but the light and grace the Church gives are nonetheless divine for all that.[30] "For the evil of My ministers can neither spoil nor defile My blood nor lessen its grace and virtue."[31] "And since the mystery of the sacrament cannot be diminished or divided by their sins, the reverence due to the treasure of My blood, and not to them personally, should not be less because of them."[32] However, it remains true, as our Lord said to the Virgin of Siena: "I have laid upon you the charge of working for the salvation of your soul and the souls of your neighbors in the mystical body of Holy Church, by example, by doctrine, by continual prayer. . . . Cease not to cast up before Me the incense of prayer for the salvation of souls, for I would have mercy on the world. Widi your prayers and sweat and tears will I wash the face of My spouse, Holy Church."[33]

The Lord permits evil, as St. Augustine says,[34] only because

29 *Dialogue,* chaps. 13, 14, 86.
30 *Ibid.,* chap. 12.
31 *Ibid.,* chaps. 14, 120.
32 *Ibid.,* chap. 118.
33 *Ibid.,* chaps. 15, 17, 86.
34 *Enchiridion,* chap. **11.**

He is powerful enough and good enough to draw a greater good from it; so manifesting both His mercy and His justice and showing the indefeasible rights of the Sovereign Good to be loved above all things.

Good can exist in this life only in a state of conflict, and that is why the Church on earth is called "militant"; for she must fight without ceasing against the maxims of the world and the spirit of evil. But she has the promises of eternal life, and, if at times she must say harsh things to her children, they ought to answer her as Peter answered our Lord: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."[85]

We must conclude, then, that the sons of the Church cannot be united with one another unless they are united to their head. All coordination, St. Thomas says,[36] presupposes a subordination to the very principle of order. Soldiers can have coordination only through subjection to their leader. In the Church, despite diversity of peoples, institutions, and human interests, there must be sincere and profound unity of faith, of hope, charity, and supernatural obedience.

Consequently children of the Church ought to be united by the mutual observance of true justice and true charity, real virtues altogether different from the word-of-mouth variety which robs the sublime words of their true meaning. Justice and charity ought to be practiced particularly in regard to the suffering. We should heed the words of St. Paul: "Bear ye one another's burdens; and so you shall fulfill the law of Christ. For if any man think himself to be something, whereas he is nothing, he deceiveth himself. But let everyone prove his own work. . . . For every one shall bear his own bur-

85 John 6: 69.

88 la Ilae, q. 100, a. 6.

den." [37] The two chief services one Christian can render another in this life, are prayer and reparation. When the Blessed Virgin appeared at Lourdes, she recommended that we "pray and do penance."

When the good pray for the wicked, their prayer calls forth the pity and pardon of tire Lord. If faithful Christians do penance, unfaithful Christians feel the good effects of it, and their offenses are more likely to be pardoned. Sometimes a just man is the savior of an impious man. Had there been ten just men in Sodom, Sodom would have been spared. Finally, not only can we pray and satisfy for our neighbor, but we can merit for him, too, if not in strict justice as our Savior did, at least with the merit of congruity founded on the bonds of charity uniting us to God and souls.

Why did Providence permit the terrible European war of some years back which stained almost a whole continent with blood just when its peoples were dreaming of universal peace? How can we escape seeing the chastisement of God in this? Why should there be such chastisement? Because the word from heaven, "Pray and do penance," was not heeded. God punishes men through men. Why? Because Christians are often only half-Christians, the "practicing" are not virtuous, the good are not good enough, those consecrated to God are not really holy. More mortification and a return to the austerity of old, inspired by hatred of sin and love of God, would bring peace back to the world. In our own time the conversion of the good to a better life, is perhaps the most efficacious good to be accomplished; for, in the mystical body, supernatural life descends from above in order to reascend toward the Lord. Let the good join repentance of heart to

87 Gal. 6: 2-5.

prayer and action, then in virtue of the communion of saints diey will save many others in saving themselves. To dam up the inflowing grace that Christ wills to communicate to other souls through us would be a terrible misfortune.

Charity is "the bond of perfection" in the mystical body uniting members to their head and members with one another; this bond ought to keep on growing until in eternity the saints and the angels have become one and are, in a way, but one spirit with God. "But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit." [38]

Such perfect union of mind and heart cannot be attained by regarding souls simply in the light of the senses or as deformed by prejudice; for, seen so, the diversity of temperaments, inclinations, characters, and human conceptions would revolt and disgust us. We need to realize that this diversity, when subordinated to a higher, supernatural, and truly divine principle, can contribute to the harmony and beauty of the whole.

We must see souls in the light of faith. Then, beneath a sometimes dull and rough exterior, we reach the supernatural being of souls—their nature, not as opposed to grace, but as capable of receiving it. And we end by discovering among their very real faults, the work of the Savior. Failing to see souls in this light, we will only too often keep in embittered hearts the memory of hard words said to us, sometimes even when they have been taken back by contrition and confession.

When we see souls in the light of faith, we cannot help but love them and try to contribute to their sanctification. Let us remember our Lord's prayer: "That they all may be one, as Thou, Father, in Me, and I in Thee. . . . And the glory

»81 Cor. 6: 17.

which Thou hast given Me, I have given to them; that they may be one, as We also are one."[39] Let us see one another in this light. Then divisions will begin to disappear. The heart will grow large with active, not merely verbal, charity. Justice according to the spirit rather than the letter of the law will be established, real and simple obedience, equally alien to servility and insubordination. This is more than the keeping of the law; it is true equity,[40] wholly penetrated with the spirit of Christ.

We should think of the great doctrine of the mystical body of our Lord while assisting at Mass, in which the sacrifice of the cross is perpetuated on the altar. Communion ought to be a participation in this sacrifice; by it our Lord desires to make our hearts like to His own heart of priest and victim; in continuing to offer Himself, He offers His mystical body, particularly those souls that pray and suffer supernaturally somewhat as He suffered.

St. Paul could say: "Who now rejoice in my sufferings for you and fill up those things that are wanting of the sufferings of Christ, in my flesh for His body, which is the Church."[41] So, in a sense, in the mystical body, Christ is in agony until the end of the world. From this point of view, as stated many times by St. Paul, contemplation on the redeeming Passion and suffering supernaturally borne are as necessary for the mystical body as the light of the sun is for our bodily eyes.[42]

Unfortunately, great sufferings, which could become purifying, only too often merely crush and exasperate souls not

89 John 17: *21* f.
40 Cf. IIa IIae, q. 120, a.2.
41 Col. 1: 24.
42 Cf. Chardon, *op. cit.,* Ier entretien, chaps. I, 2, 3, 18, 24.

open to the light that would reach them from the crucifix and the tabernacle, if they would but pray and persevere in prayer. God's providence sends afflictions not only to individuals, but to groups of men, that they may come to know themselves better, to find out by experience their own limitations, to discover and correct their faults, to aspire to a higher good, and to enlist a more perfect help in reaching that end.

We sometimes believe a conflict of duty exists between subordinate obligations when opposing human passions have really upset their perfect balance.[43] To see their subordination, we must purify our hearts by prayer and love of God and neighbor; we must silence pride and listen to our Savior; we must be as kind and understanding with others as we need them to be with us. The gift of understanding will then illuminate our understanding, and we shall grasp in apparently complex and difficult cases the true meaning of our obligations, die right way to our last end or salvation. We shall discover how all truth and all human justice are subordinated to the "one thing necessary," the thing we must seek above all others.[44] Calmly, as Christians, we can then recall that, if we have a family and an earthly country to love and defend, we are also members of a great spiritual family founded by Christ, the mystical body of the Savior. We Christians belong to that Church which combats the spirit of guile and iniquity in this life, which suffers in purgatory, and which in heaven, our true homeland, is intimately associated with the life of God, with His infallible knowledge, sovereignly luminous with total and infinite Truth, in His immutable love of the unmixed Good, and with His eternal happiness that no dis-

45 Cf. IIa IIae, q. 101, a. 4.
44 Cf. *ibid.*, q. 8, a. 4.

order can trouble or decrease. Under the guidance of the Good Shepherd, who incorporates us with Himself, who assimilates us to Himself by giving us life, let us push on toward our true country, which is His and ours, too, since the life of grace is eternal life already begun.

Having spoken of God's love for us and the return He expects from us, of the love of God and the mystery of the cross in our Lord, and lastly, of the love of God and the mystical body of Christ, we are now about to consider our progress in love. The Christian grows in love by self-imposed mortification, by meritorious acts, by Holy Communion, by the crosses sent to purify senses and spirit and to make him work with and like Christ and His Blessed Mother, for his neighbor's salvation.

The doctrine as developed by St. Thomas and St. John of the Cross is what we shall follow. With the latter we shall see, as we have indicated in another work,[45] that "the passive purification of the senses is common, and occurs in the greater number of beginners"[46] in order to lead them into the illuminative way. We shall also see that the proficient or advanced find themselves in "the way of illumination or of infused contemplation wherewith God Himself feeds and nourishes the soul."[47] As to the passive purification of the spirit, it is, as we shall show, the door to the perfect unitive way, which in turn is a prelude to the life of heaven.

45 *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* tr. Doyle, pp. 6, 7, 223.
46 *The Dark. Night,* Bk. I, chap. 8.
47 *Ibid.,* chap. 14.

PART II

The Love of God and Mortification

CHAPTER VI

Mortification or Active Purification

Spiritual progress, being especially progress in charity, ought to make us fulfill more and more perfectly the two great precepts of love of God and of neighbor, to which the other commandments and the three evangelical counsels are subordinated. In other words, we must make God some return for the love He has shown us in creating us, in preserving us, in having us participate in His intimate life, in increasing the life of grace in us that He may bring us to the life of eternity. Progress in charity is measured not by sensible consolations, which sometimes accompany devotion, but by two essential manifestations: a dying to sin and progressive configuration to Christ Jesus by imitation of His virtues.

Let us consider these two signs of spirtual advancement; and first, the dying to sin. Speaking to all of us, as St. Luke remarks, our Lord said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." [1] "Let him deny himself": this is the law of mortification, which should be self-imposed. "Let him take up his cross": this is the obligation to bear patiently the trials God Himself sends us to purify us and to make us work for the salvation of souls. To make it clear that renouncement is not an end, but a means, masters of the spiritual life often call mortification active purification because we impose it on ourselves, and the

[1] Luke 9: 23.

cross passive purification, because it is imposed on us. Both of these forms of purification we are about to discuss; the former, first.

ARTICLE I

PRACTICAL NATURALISM

Mortification and humility as permanently organized in the religious life through the practice of the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, are things so contrary to the spirit of the world that it feels forced to deny their necessity. Practical naturalism keeps reappearing in one form or another, and it always makes little of mortification and the vows of religion, fancying that tliese vows are not means of deliverance for a man, but an obstacle to the good he ought to achieve. It questions why Christianity talks so much about mortification, if it is a doctrine of life; of renouncement, if its task is to assimilate rather than to destroy human activity; of obedience, if the gospel is a doctrine of liberty. Naturalism contends that these passive virtues have nothing but the force of inertia, and matter little except for negative souls incapable of positive activity.

It asks why we should depreciate our natural activity, reminds us that nature is good and comes from God, who has made it with a bent to love its Author more than itself and above all things. We are told to recall that our passions or emotions, that is, the different movements of our sensible appetite, such as desire and aversion, joy and sadness, are morally neither good nor evil; they become so only through the intention of our will when consenting to them, arousing them, controlling them, or failing to control them. The point is then

made that we need not mortify the passions but only regulate them, as they are forces to be utilized, not destroyed. An appeal to the teaching of St. Thomas follows, noting how much he differs from many spiritual authors and in particular the author of *The Imitation*.[2] That the expressions found in the latter's treatment of "the different motions of nature and of grace" are somewhat Jansenistic is delicately proposed.

To wage such war on our own judgment and will may make us a prey to scrupulosity, reduce us to a state of servitude, and rob us of all spontaneity. We should not condemn the life of the world, since Providence has placed us in the world, not to fight it but to make it better. The value of religious life can be measured by its social influence. That it may exercise this influence, it must not be hampered by excessive preoccupation with renouncement, mortification, humility, and obedience. On the contrary, it ought to permit the greatest possible development of the spirit of initiative and every natural aspiration. Only in this way can we understand the people of our own time and make contact with a world we should not despise but improve. This is the objection formulated by Americanism and repeated by Modernism, a clever mixture of truth and falsity which invokes St. Thomas' authority for support.

St. Thomas does say that the emotions or movements of the sensible appetite, the passions as he calls them, are forces to be utilized and not destroyed. He also says we should regulate and not kill them. Nevertheless we must not forget that as soon as they are not well regulated by temperance, detachment, chastity, strength, patience, humility, meekness, justice, obedience, and the other virtues animated by charity,

2 Bk. III, chap. 54.

these passions become the roots of a host of faults and vices. Almost all the virtues, both the theological and the cardinal, as well as the others connected with them, must avoid two contrary vices. Now vices and their consequences ought not simply to be covered up or regulated or moderated; they must be rooted out. The virtue of penance inspires us to make reparation for our sins by mortification.[3] St. Thomas has laid open to us, in the *Secunda secundae* of the *Summa theologica,* the whole field for mortification by his enumeration of the vices: the seven capital sins, progeny of the three concupiscences and parents each to six or seven offspring worse than themselves.[4] St. Gregory describes the terrible progeny of the capital sins as numbering more than forty vices, which happily at least are not connected like the virtues; for, unlike the kingdom of good, the kingdom of evil can never be one since it has forsaken unity.[5] The material for mortification is scattered but, sad to say, nowhere lacking, whatever amateurs may say of the "short and easy way" to go to God.

Frequently, too, practical naturalism repeats St. Thomas' principle: "Grace must not destroy but perfect nature." The motions of nature, it is added, are not as disordered as the author of *The Imitation* says; we must have the full development of nature under grace. When a man lacks the true spirit of faith, he misinterprets the very principle he invokes. St. Thomas as here quoted is speaking of nature in the metaphysical and not in the ascetical sense of the term; that is, of human nature as such, the nature of man as abstractly defined, in its essential goodness as a work of God. As such

[3] Cf. Hia, q. 85, concerning the virtue of penance and its relation to the other virtues.

[4] Cf. la Ilae, q.84.

[5] *Ibid.,* q.73, a. I, ad turn.

it certainly ought to be perfected and not destroyed by grace.

In this instance St. Thomas is not speaking of man's fallen and wounded nature deformed by that often unconscious egoism which alloys so many of our actions, human nature as really found in the concrete since the sin of Adam. And it is of just this nature, hurt by wounds so slow to heal even after baptism, that ascetical and mystical works like *The Imitation* speak. And drey are merely restating what St. Thomas himself taught about the results of original and personal sin.[6] The disorder consequent upon sin ought certainly to be destroyed; and grace works for this destruction, for it not only lifts us up but also heals us, *gratia sanans et elevans.*

To a thoughtless young man who never left off invoking the principle, "Grace does not destroy nature," a fine priest and teacher once answered: "Grace not only does not destroy nature, but reconstitutes and restores it by destroying the seeds of death in it; that done, grace perfects nature in proportion to the thoroughness of this salutary destruction, as the lives of the saints all show." Only in the saints can we see what the "full development of nature under grace" means. To look elsewhere is to risk a misunderstanding that may end in perverting it completely, by destroying both nature and grace under the pretext of saving everything.

Because the equivocal use of the word "nature" provides the lukewarm and the mediocre with an escape, they are apt to keep and cherish it with swift and disastrous consequences. The tree is judged by its fruits. Because they have cared too much about the world, these new style apostles have not converted the world but have been converted by it They begin

[8] *Ibid.,* q.85 et 86.

by ignoring the consequences of original sin; holding, with the Pelegians and Jean Jacques Rousseau, that man is born good. Next, they forget the infinite gravity of mortal sin as an offense against God; and consider it only from the human, the external, point of view, by the evident evil it works in the present life. As a natural consequence they cannot appreciate at all the gravity of sins of the spirit: incredulity, presumption, pride, and the disorders resulting from these.

Likewise they disregard the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end. Instead of speaking of the beatific vision and the life of eternity, they indulge in talk about a vague moral ideal, tinged with religion, wherein the radical opposition between heaven and hell disappear. Finally, the writers to whom we refer have completely forgotten that our Lord chose the cross as the great means to save the world.

By its four principal consequences this doctrine plainly reveals its sources: practical naturalism or the practical negation of the supernatural, a principle that has at times been openly declared in this form, "Mortification is not essential to Christianity."

ARTICLE II

THE NECESSITY OF MOMIFICATION

According to the teaching of St. Paul, all these more or less cleverly presented inventions clearly have no connection with the life and doctrine of our Lord and the saints. The work our Savior came to do on earth was not human philanthropy, but divine charity ; He accomplished it by talking to men more about their duties than about their rights, by telling them they must wholly die to sin in order to receive new and abundant

life; and He willed to prove His love for diem by dying on the cross for their redemption. The saints have followed Him; they have all been marked by the likeness of Christ crucified; they have all loved mortification and the cross, whether they were saints of the primitive Church, like the first martyrs, or saints of the Middle Ages like St. Bernard, St. Dominic, and St. Francis of Assisi, or saints of more recent times like St. Benedict Joseph Labre and the holy Cure of Ars.

Our Lord was speaking to us all when He said: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: for he that shall lose his life for My sake shall save it. For what is a man advantaged, if he gain the whole world and lose himself and cast away himself?"[7] "Amen, amen, I say to you, unless the grain of wheat falling into the ground die, itself remaineth alone. But if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit. He that loveth his life shall lose it, and he that hateth his life in this world keepeth it unto life eternal."[8] Blessed are they who hate themselves in the sense in which the saints use that expression. Because they glorify God by hating that self within them which is compounded of egoism and pride and by loving their own souls holily, in and for God, they glorify Him on earth, and His glory will be their song for all eternity. God helps them in this work of dying that He may make them live with new and superabundant life, for He has said: "I am the true vine; and My Father is the husbandman. Every branch in Me that beareth not fruit, He will take away; and every one that beareth fruit, He will purge it, that it may bring forth more fruit."[9] This pruning

[7] Luke 9: 23-25.
[8] John 12: 24 f.
[8] *Ibid.*, 15: I f.

is surely not done without suffering. The mortification and patience demanded in the Sermon on the Mount,[10] as we shall see, go far in that direction.

St. Paul continues the teaching of the Master. He does not merely say, like pagan moralists, that man must restrain his passions. He says: "I chastise my body and bring it into subjection; lest perhaps, when I have preached to others, I myself should become a castaway." [11] "The flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh. For these are contrary one to another; so that you do not the things that you would." [12] "For I am delighted with the law of God, according to the inward man; but I see another law in my members, fighting against the law of my mind and captivating me in the law of sin that is.in my members. Unhappy man that I am, who shall deliver me from die body of this death?"[13] "And they that are Christ's have crucified their flesh, with the vices and concupiscences." [14] Moreover, by the works of the flesh, St. Paul meant not simply immorality, licentiousness, but also, as he says in the same place: "enmities, contentions, emulations, wraths, quarrels, dissensions, sects." [15] All of diese are opposed to the fruits of the Spirit: "charity, joy, peace, patience, benignity, goodness, longanimity, mildness, faith, modesty, continency." [16] That the new man may live, the old man must indeed die. "This then I say and testify in the Lord: That henceforward you walk not as also the Gentiles. . . . You have not so learned Christ: if so be that

10 Matt., chaps. 5-7.
11 1 Cor. 9: 27.
12 Gal. 5: 17.
13 Rom. 7: 22-24.
14 Gal. 5: 24.
15 *Ibid.*, 20.
16 *Ibid.*, 22 f.

you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, as the truth is in Jesus: to put off, according to former conversation, the old man, who is corrupted according to the desire of its error. And be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth. . . . And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and anger and indignation and clamor and blasphemy be put away from you, with all malice. . . . Be ye therefore followers of God, as most dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us and hath delivered Himself for us, an oblation and a sacrifice to God for an odor of sweetness." [17]

"Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon the earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with Christ in God." [18] "If you live according to the flesh, you shall die; but if by the Spirit you mortify the deeds of the flesh, you shall live. For whosoever are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." [19]

The law of mortification and the cross applies especially to apostles, who ought to follow our Lord Jesus Christ more closely diat they may manifest Him to the world and save souls. This is why St. Paul writes: "We have this treasure [of divine light] in earthen vessels, that the excellency may be of die power of God and not of us. In all things we suffer tribulation, but are not distressed. We are straitened, but are

17 Eph. 4:17-5: 2.
18 Col. 3:1-3.
10 Rom. 8:13 f.

not destitute. We suffer persecution, but are not forsaken. We are cast down, but we perish not. Always bearing about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies. For we who live are always delivered unto death for Jesus' sake, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our mortal flesh. . . . For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man is corrupted, yet the inward man is renewed day by day. For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory." [20]

St. Paul's words, like his Master's, are a far cry from the practical naturalism we spoke of earlier; for to maintain that mortification is not of the essence of Christianity amounts to saying that Christianity does not teach us to die to sin and its consequences, that the virtue of penance is unnecessary for Christians. The preaching of the Precursor and all that St. Paul wrote about putting off the old man and putting on the new have no place in such teaching and have to be passed over or suppressed.

ARTICLE III

PRINCIPLES OF ST. THOMAS AND ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS CONCERNING NECESSARY PURIFICATION

Later, with St. Thomas, we shall study the four great reasons why mortification and the cross are imposed on us; let it suffice us for the moment to recall as a fundamental principle the specific difference he pointed out between Christian or infused temperance, as described in the Gospel and

[20] II Cor. 4: 7-17.

St. Paul, and acquired temperance, as described by Aristotle and the great pagan moralists.

He thus expresses himself: "Any change introduced into the difference expressed in a definition involves a difference of species. But the definition of infused virtue contains the words, "which God works in us without us." [21] Therefore acquired virtue, to which these words cannot apply, is not the same species as infused virtue.[22]

There is a twofold specific difference among habits. The first is taken from the specific and formal aspects of their objects. Now the object of every virtue is a good considered as in that virtue's proper matter: thus the object of temperance is a good in respect of the pleasures connected with the concupiscence of touch. The formal aspect of this object is from reason which fixes the mean in these concupiscences . . . Now it is evident that the mean that is appointed in such concupiscences according to the rule of human reason, is seen under a different aspect from the mean which is fixed according to the divine rule. For instance, in the consumption of food, the mean fixed by human reason is that food should not harm the health of the body nor hinder the use of reason: whereas, according to the divine rule, it behooves man to chastise his body and bring it into subjection (I Cor. 9:27), by abstinence in the matter of food and drink and the like. It is therefore evident that infused and acquired temperance differ in species; and the same applies to the other virtues.

The other specific difference among habits is taken from the

21 Ia IIae, q.63, a.4.

22 A virtue is therefore essentially infused when it cannot be acquired by the repetition of acts but can be produced in us only by God. By analogy, theologians generally speak of infused contemplation (although contemplation is not a virtue, a *habitus,* but an act) because, unlike philosophical or even theological contemplation, it is not the result of our personal activity but is produced in us by a special inspiration of God. Infused contemplation is not an act that we can perform at will, like the ordinary acts of faith, hope, or charity or the simple attentive consideration of the mysteries of faith.

things to which they are directed: a man's health and a horse's are not of the same species, on account of the difference between the natures to which their respective healths are directed. In the same sense, the Philosopher says *(Polit.,* Bk. III) that citizens have diverse virtues according as they are well directed to diverse forms of government. In the same way, too, those infused moral virtues, whereby men behave well in respect of their being fellow citizens with the saints, and of the household of God (Eph. 2:19) differ from the acquired virtues, whereby man behaves well in respect of human affairs.

Infused or Christian temperance and the acquired temperance described by Aristotle are virtues of different orders. The Christian virtue, under the direction of faith and the inspiration of charity and penance, requires mortification that acquired temperance does not demand. Ruled by the principles of natural reason, the acquired moral virtues could go on increasing indefinitely without ever attaining the dignity of the correlative infused moral virtues; for the latter have an essentially supernatural object, inaccessible to the natural powers of man or angel; they are ruled by principles essentially supernatural, and thus, in proportion to their formal objects which specify them, they are directly conformed to participation in the divine nature, that is, sanctifying grace as received at baptism. The infused moral virtues do not belong to the natural order, whether human or angelic, but to the supernatural order of the inner life of God. Hence infused temperance, and the virtues annexed to it, are ruled by faith and infused prudence, under the inspiration of charity and penance. This we know from the Church's doctrines on original sin and the gravity and consequences of mortal sin, as well as other teachings of the Church, all of which

can come to us only through divine revelation, since they are above the natural grasp of even the angelic intellects.

Lastly, let us remark that, according to St. Thomas, the infused moral virtues ought to keep growing, to climb toward the summit of perfection, without deviating toward their contrary vices on the right or tire left; they are something besides and above the social virtues of a good citizen. They progressively merit the name of purifying *{purgatoriae}* virtues or virtues of the purified soul *{virtutes purgati animi}*. We recall how St. Thomas describes the purifying virtues: "Some are virtues of men who are on their way and tending toward the divine similitude; and these are called perfecting virtues. Thus prudence, by contemplating the things of God, counts as nothing all things of the world, and directs all the thoughts of the soul to God alone; temperance, so far as nature allows, neglects the needs of the body; fortitude prevents the soul from being afraid of neglecting the body and rising to heavenly things; and justice consists in the soul's giving wholehearted consent to follow the way thus proposed. Besides these, there are the virtues of those who have already attained to the divine similitude: these are called the perfect virtues. Thus prudence sees nothing but the things of God; temperance knows no earthly desire; fortitude has no knowledge of passion; and justice, by imitating the divine mind, is united thereto by an everlasting covenant. Such are the virtues attributed to the blessed, or in this life to some who are at the summit of perfection." [23]

According to St. Thomas' teaching, every Christian should become an interior soul and attain to the truly solid, purifying virtues which, with actual grace, are capable of resisting the

23 Ia IIae, q.61, a. 5.

temptations of the world, the flesh, and the devil. But these purifying virtues, as St. Thomas has just described them, are conceivable only in a spiritual organism animated by an already high degree of charity and they must be accompanied by the corresponding gifts of the Holy Ghost, under the direction of the gift of wisdom.[24] Therefore even people in the active life should aspire to complete development of the spiritual organism ; they ought to tend toward perfection not only by the moral virtues, but by the theological virtues and the gifts. Aldiough evidently not called to the life of a Carthusian or a Carmelite, they ought to remember, as St. Thomas says, that the active life disposes us for the contemplative life,[25] that it precedes the contemplative life "as that which is common to all precedes in the order of generation that which is proper to the perfect." [26] The contemplative life belongs properly to the perfect because, as the holy doctor says, "it is directed to the love of God not of any degree but to that which is perfect." [27] By its radiation, love becomes the veritable soul of the aspostolate.

Moreover, many Christian souls ought to unite the life of Martha with Mary's in the mixed life. Our Lord willed His apostles to have this type of life. In itself it is higher than either the active or the purely contemplative life.[28] If our own hearts are not purified, if we ourselves are not closely united to God, we cannot snatch souls from evil, make them love Christ more than themselves, and lead them successfully to the works of salvation.

2i Ibid., q.68, a.5.

25 Ha Ilae, q. 182, a.4.

28 Ibid., ad lum.

27 Ibid.

28 Ila Ilae, q.188, a.6; Illa, q.40, a-i, ad 2um; a.2, ad 311m; Ila Ilae, q.182, a.i, ad turn.

If a truly perfect life requires the full development of the spiritual organism by the virtues and the gifts connected with charity, a profound purification is needed to reach such a development. To obtain a clear idea of this truth, we need only recall that, in our advance toward the summit of perfection, often we deviate from the right path, and we then try to make good our error in one direction by going as far wrong in the other. Without exterior and interior mortification and the testing of purification, we cannot keep to the ascending course traced by the Lord between negligence and oversolicitude, imprudence and cunning, cowardice and rashness, softness and stubbornness, timidity and pride, discouragement and presumption, self-depreciation and bragging, obedience and servility, inept indulgence and excessive harshness.

We find divergence from the right path easy because of secret pride, of subtle self-love worming its way into the apparent practice of the highest virtues. Therefore, at the beginning of the *Ascent of Carmel,* St. John of the Cross described a symbolic mount at die base of which the soul finds three paths which seem to lead to the summit; although in reality only one path does so. In the center the narrow way of perfection plunges steeply upward. It begins with total abnegation. At the entrance we read: "Nothing, nothing, nothing," and a little fardier on: "Since I desire nothing out of self-love, everything is given to me without my seeking it."

The misguided spirit may take the way of the good things of die earth, where it is written: "The more I seek, the less I find; I cannot climb the mountain because I have lost my way." Whoever takes this route must ultimately make this admission.

The imperfect spirit chooses a third way—wishing to reach

the goods of heaven without too much trouble and stopping to delight in first consolations or even in the exercise of the apostolate. Over this road we read: "I have dallied and so have not gone far or high, for I did not take the narrow path." To arrive at the summit of perfect union with God, we must take the narrow path of mortification and of the purification of the senses and the spirit: "How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life!" [29] But the route that is so narrow at the beginning widens out more and more in the sketch made by St. John of the Cross. He shows that it leads to the four cardinal virtues, to the virtues of the purified soul, then to the seven gifts, to the perfect theological virtues, to the twelve fruits of the Holy Ghost, and finally to the very summit of the mount where we read: "Divine silence, divine wisdom, unending banquet; the glory and honor of God five alone on this mountain." This is truly, as the Psalmist declares, "a mountain in which God is well pleased to dwell" [30] and to which He calls His friends.

29 Matt. 7:14.
80 Ps. 57: 16.

CHAPTER VII

Mortification and the Results of Original Sin

Mortification is not, as naturalism would have us believe, the destruction of nature, but the restoration or healing of nature through the destruction of sin and its consequences. It entails surgery, but only to extirpate the seeds of corruption and to restore health. It can be defined as "death to sin," which is, in reality, death to death or increasingly perfect life, holy and pure and unalterably united to God. An integral definition would put it: Mortification is the destruction of sin and its consequences, the renouncement of things licit but not useful for us, so that preoccupation with them may not absorb us to the detriment of divine union.[1] Being ordered to the spiritual edification of Christians, this destruction is necessary for all; for everyone, each according to his condition, ought to tend toward the perfection of charity in virtue of the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind."[2] And if all cannot actually practice the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, all ought to have the spirit of these counsels, the spirit of detachment, that they may die more and more completely to the three concupiscences and fulfill more and more perfectly the one great commandment.[3]

1 Cf. *Summa,* IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 2; Ia IIae, q. 108, a. 4.
2 Luke 10: 27.
3 IIa Hae, q. 184, a.3, c.

Mortification as here defined has nothing in common with the misrepresentation of it given by naturalism, with a view to denying its necessity. It is a far cry, too, from what the Jansenists made of it, for their proud austerity did not enlarge the heart but narrowed it. They forgot the words of the divine Master: "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to the Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee."[4]

Mortification is called active purification, for we impose it upon ourselves in conformity with what Christ "said to all," as St. Luke relates: "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself." [5] What our Lord immediately adds: "and take up his cross daily and follow Me," refers to whatever passive purifications God imposes on us, as Fie laid the cross upon our Savior. God Himself comes, in fact, to bring the work of active purification to deep and full completion, if we will but permit Him, so that we may attain to perfect purity and be associated in the great mystery of redemption dirough suffering. "The Lord killeth and maketh alive; He bringeth down to hell and bringeth back again. . . . He humbleth and He exalteth, . . . lifteth up the poor from the dunghill: that he may sit with princes, and hold the throne of glory." [6] These words of the Canticle of Anna come back to lasting life in the Magnificat.

Mortification is, tlien, necessary for the soul to be delivered from sin and its consequences, that it may "die to sin" and cleave more purely and firmly to God by imitating Christ

4 Matt. 6: 18.
• Luke 9: 23.
6 I Kings 2: 6-8.

Jesus. These two big reasons can be expressed more concretely by being divided as follows: Mortification is necessary (1) to destroy the consequences of original sin in us, (2) to do away with the results of our own personal sins, (3) to subordinate our natural activity perfectly to the life of grace, never losing sight of the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end, (4) to imitate Christ crucified and be associated with Him in the work of redemption.

In the following article we shall speak of the first reason. We shall see the consequences, the wounds of original sin that continue to exist in the baptized. We shall examine the nature of these wounds and learn how they are treated and gradually healed.

ARTICLE I

THE RESULTS OF ORIGINAL SIN IN THE BAPTIZED

In this matter we must avoid the pessimism of the Protestants and the Jansenists, who maintain that our will has been destroyed by original sin and unrestored by grace. We must be equally careful not to fall into the unrealistic optimism of those who, partly forgetting about the *fomes peccati,* seem to believe that the state of fallen man is in no way inferior to a purely natural state and that baptism delivers us from every disorder resulting from original sin.

Baptism certainly produces two inestimable effects: sanctifying grace and the baptismal character; and the "good of grace in one [little child] is greater than the good of nature in the whole universe." [1] It has more value than all the angelic natures taken together, because it belongs to an infinitely

[1] IIa IIae, q. 113, a. 9, ad 2um.

higher and strictly divine order, and makes us temples of the indwelling Trinity. Baptism incorporates us into Christ, illuminates our intellect by faith, converts our will to God by hope and charity, opens the gates of heaven to us, and remits all the punishment due to our sins.

However, baptism does not take away the penalties of the present life: sorrow, concupiscence and death, the remains of original sin in human nature. St. Thomas says that "this is suitable for our spiritual training; namely, in order that, by fighting against concupiscence and other defects to which he is subject, man may receive the crown of victory."[8] "Concupiscence," he adds, "is diminished by baptism";[9] it is not destroyed.

This doctrine is thus defined by the Council of Trent: "In the one baptized there remains concupiscence or an inclination to sin, which, since it is left for us to wrestle with, cannot injure those who do not acquiesce but resist manfully by the grace of Jesus Christ; indeed, he who shall have striven lawfully shall be crowned. This concupiscence, which the Apostle sometimes calls sin (Rom. 6:12 ff.), the holy council declares the Catholic Church has never understood to be called sin in the sense that it is truly and properly sin in those born again, but in the sense that it is of sin and inclines to sin."[10]

The wound of concupiscence that results from original sin, begins to mend with baptismal grace but is long in healing. It is by no means tire only wound. There are three others, as St. Thomas explains.[11]

8 Illa, q.69, a.3.

9 *Ibid.,* a.4, ad 311m.

10 Denzingcr, no. 792. (Schroeder, *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent,* p. 23.—Tr.)

11 Ia Ilae, q.85, a.3.

As a result of original justice, the reason had perfect hold over the lower parts of the soul, while reason itself was perfected by God and was subject to Him. Now this same original justice was forfeited through the sin of our first parents, as already stated; so that all the powers of the soul are left, as it were, destitute of their proper order, whereby they are naturally directed to virtue; which destitution is called a wounding of nature.12

Again, there are four of the soul's powers that can be the subject of virtue, namely, the reason, where prudence resides, the will where justice is, the irascible, the subject of fortitude, and the concupiscible, the subject of temperance.13 Hence so far as the reason is deprived of its order to the true, there is the wound of ignorance; so far as the will is deprived of its order to the good, there is the wound of malice; so far as the irascible is deprived of its order to the delectable, moderated by reason, there is the wound of concupiscence.

Accordingly these are the four wounds inflicted on the whole of human nature as a result of our first parents' sin. But since the inclination to the good virtue is diminished in each individual on account of actual sin, . . . these four wounds are also the result of other sins, so far as through sin the reason is obscured, especially in practical matters, the will hardened to evil, good actions become more difficult, and concupiscence more impetuous.

The four wounds caused by original sin and aggravated by our personal sins may be listed as follows:

12 The words of the text are as follows: *"Et ideo omnes vires animae remanent quodammodo destitutae proprio ordine, quo naturaliter ordinantur ad virtutem; et ipsa destitutio vulneratio naturae dicitur."* St. Thomas does not say *"quo naturaliter ordinabantur,"* as if this order or inclination to virtue were only the effect of a gratuitous gift of original justice and so lost by original sin; he says *"naturaliter ordinantur,"* giving us to understand that the natural inclination of these powers for virtue is itself weakened.

13 The irascible and the concupiscible are the two forms of sensuous appetency or sensibility; the irascible appetite tends to difficult sensible goods, the concupiscible to delectable sensible goods.

Wounds of the soul	the higher faculties	in the will:	the wound of malice or the inclination to evil, egoism
		in the intellect:	the wound of ignorance, whence come imprudence, blindness
	the lower faculties	in the irascible appetite:	the wound of weakness, whence come pusillanimity, sloth
		in the concupiscible appetite:	the wound of concupiscence, whence come lust, gluttony

According to St. Thomas,[14] original sin, initially in the essence of the soul as a privation of the grace of original justice, first infects the will, which should be subject to God, and then the other powers that should be subject to right reason. Sin, found first in the rebel will, afterwards extends its ravages to the other faculties.

St. Thomas examines the question whether the three wounds of malice, ignorance, and weakness, like concupiscence, remain in the baptized, or whether they are immediately healed by baptismal grace. When considering grace and the infused virtues that are the effects of baptism, he says: "Difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil are in the baptized, not through their lacking the habits of the virtues, but through concupiscence, which is not taken away in bap-

14 Ia Hae, q.83, a.2, 3.

tism. But just as concupiscence is diminished, that it may not enslave us, so are difficulty in doing good and proneness to evil, that man may not be overcome by them." [15] Evidently as much must be admitted in regard to our ignorance about the moral direction of our lives. The four wounds are in process of healing in the baptized, but they are not cured by baptism.

We sum up. The wound in the will, an inclination to evil, is the source of self-love, often of gross unconscious egoism, pride, envy, and avarice; the wound in the intellect, ignorance, is the principle of imprudence in all its forms—thoughtlessness, foolhardiness, and blindness of mind in regard to higher things; the wound in the irascible appetite, weakness, is the principle of faintheartedness, cowardice, sloth, human respect or worldly fear, and discouragement; and concupiscence, the wound of the concupiscible appetite, is the principle of lust and the different forms of intemperance.

ARTICLE II

THE NATURE OF THE WOUNDS RESULTING FROM ORIGINAL SIN

All theologians admit that repeated personal sins gradually weaken our natural inclination to virtue, for an inclination to evil weakens an inclination to good.[16] The question naturally arises whether the wounds resulting from original sin also weaken man's natural inclination to virtue.

Many theologians have thought that the wounds of original sin do not weaken our natural inclination to virtue, that they are only a privation of the gratuitous gift of original jus-

15 IIIa, q.69, a.4, ad 3Im.
16Cf. Ia IIae, q.85, a.i.

tice, which, by elevating man to supernatural life, raised his nature to a state of integrity or of perfection. It would follow that man in his fallen state is no less able to do good than he would have been in a merely natural state, called a state of pure nature, in which God could have created him, without giving him sanctifying grace, or integrity, or natural perfection.17

Most Thomists disagree with this opinion, believing that man in the state of fallen and unrestored nature, has less strength to do natural moral good than he would have had in a purely natural state. Almost all the great commentators on St. Thomas hold this view.18

They base tlieir opinion principally on the fact that in the state of fallen nature man is born with a will turned away from God by original sin, *aversa a Deo;* whereas, in a merely natural state or the state of pure nature, he would have been born with a will that could either be directed toward God or could prefer a created good to Him, but which would not be turned away from Him.19 Original sin certainly turns the

17 Such is the opinion of the following: Suarez, *De gratia,* Prolog., IV, c.9; Bellarmine, *De gratia primi hominis,* c. 5; Mazella, *De gratia,* no. 1069; Palmieri, th. 78; Pesch, no. 282. According to them the state of fallen man is certainly lower than the state of natural integrity, but not than the state of pure nature. In their view fallen man and man in the state of pure nature differ only *sicut nudatus a nudo,* not any more than a man deprived of his clothing and disturbed at no longer having them differs from a naked man who never had any clothes and who does not experience any disturbance thereby. Cf. Hugon, *De gratia* (i927)> P· 79·

18 See Billuart, *De gratia,* diss. II, a. 3; Salmanticenses, *De peccatis* in lam Ilae, q.85, a.3, and *De gratia,* disp. Π, dub. iii, nos. 102, 116, 135, dub. viii, no. 287. Cited in these passages are many who hold this position: Capreolus, Ferrariensis, Conrad Kollin, Alvarez, John of St. Thomas; to this list can be added Lemos, Contenson, Goudin, and many others, including Hugon. In his *Clypeus,* Gonet departs from this common Thomistic path, but returns to it in his later *Manuale* (Lyons, 1681), I, 218. Surprisingly, it has been abandoned more recently by the Dominican Father Kors.

18 Cf St. Thomas, *De veritate,* q.24, a. 12, ad 2um; *De malo,* q.4, a.2 et q.4, a.2.

will away from God as our ultimate supernatural end, and indirectly also from God as our ultimate natural end, for every sin against our final supernatural end is, indirectly, a sin against the natural law, which ordains that we obey God in whatever He commands. Since the will sets all the other faculties in action, if it turns from God toward evil, all the other faculties will suffer too, for they will not possess fully the inclination to virtue that would be theirs in a purely natural state.

That this doctrine is undoubtedly St. Thomas' very own we can conclude from what he teaches on the necessity of grace both to love God, the author of our nature, above all things and to keep the natural law. The holy doctor first says that "man, by his natural powers alone, can love God more than himself and above all things."[20] Then, after recalling the principle that every creature is naturally inclined to love God, as the author of its nature, more than itself, he adds that in the state of corrupt nature man cannot do so. As a result of the corruption of his nature, his will, unless healed by the grace of God, will tend toward its own private good.[21] Against this egoism we must be ever at war.

For the same reason man in the state of fallen nature cannot keep the whole natural law.[22] Fallen nature gets back to

20 Ia Ilae, q. 109, a.3: "On the contrary, as some maintain, man was first made with only natural endowments; and in this state it is manifest that he loved God to some extent. But he did not love God equally with himself, or less than himself, otherwise he would have sinned. Therefore he loved God above himself. Therefore man, by his natural powers alone, can love God more than himself and above all tilings." In this text, it is true, St. Thomas seems to have intended the expression *"ex solis naturalibus"* to mean what it meant to earlier theologians, that is, that Adam was created in the state of integrity *before* receiving sanctifying grace.

21 *Ibid.*

22 Ia Ilae, q. 109, a. 4.

its normal state only by habitual grace which has the function of healing *(gratia sanans),* as well as of restoring it to supernatural life *(gratia elevans).*

In many other places St. Thomas speaks in the same way, notably when he describes the wounds resulting from original sin. They are not merely the privation of a gratuitous gift: "Malice is not to be taken here as a sin, but as a certain proneness to evil, according to the words of Gen. 8:21: 'Man's senses are prone to evil from his youth.' " [23] The wound that Venerable Bede calls "weakness" is opposed to the virtue of fortitude.[21] Likewise the one called "concupiscence" is not concupiscence in so far as it is natural to man "but in so far as it goes beyond the bounds of reason." [25]

This is plainly a question not only of the wounds caused by our personal sins, but also of those that come from original sin [26] and continue to exist even after baptism, although they are then in process of healing.[27] St. Thomas speaks in the same way in other places in his works.[28] He even sees in the disorder of concupiscence and the weakness for good which we find in humanity a rather probable sign of original sin.

This doctrine seems to echo both the Gospels and the Epistles of St. Paul, where the Apostle treats the question of the "old man" and the necessity of "putting on the new man." [29]

23 *Ibid.,* q. 85, a. 3, ad 2um.

24 *Ibid.,* ad 411m.

25 *Ibid.,* ad jum.

28 la Ilae, q. 85, a. 3.

27 Illa, q.6g, a.4, ad 3um.

28la Ilae, q.91, a.6; q.82, a.I, ad ium; q.83, a.1–3; q.109, a.2, ad 3um. *II Sent.,* d.30, q. i, a.i, ad 311m; *De rnalo,* q. 2, a. 11; q. 4, a. 1, ad 1411m; q.4, a.2, c.; q.5, a.i, ad 411m, ad loum, ad 1311m; q.5, a.2, ad ium; *De veritate,* q.24, a.12, ad 2um; *in Ep. ad Rom.,* vi, 6; vii, 23; *ad Ephes.,* iv, 22; *ad Col.,* iii, 9. Cf. also the *Tabula aurea* under the words *fomes, infectio, peccatum,* 107, 283, 319, 329, 333> 342· *Gratia,* 2, 120, 121, 127, 177.

29 *Contra Gentes,* Bk. IV, chap. 52.

We meet it again in the well known pages of *The Imitation of Christ*[30] where the author treats "Of the Different Motions of Nature and Grace" and "Of the Corruption of Nature and of the Efficacy of Grace."

The saints, enlightened by the gift of knowledge in regard to human misery, generally speak thus. And the same is true not only of those who, like St. Augustine, have written against the Pelagians and other deniers of original sin, but even of those who, like St. Alphonsus Liguori, have combated seventeenth-century Jansenism. St. Alphonsus expressly says: "In man's present state, concupiscence impels more strongly to sin than it would have done in the state of perfect nature."—"In the state of fallen nature the miseries of man are much graver than tliey would have been in the state of perfect nature." [31]

The natural sense of certain passages of the Church's official teaching seems to come to the same thing. To verify this we have only to examine what is said about the wounds of our fallen nature. The enfeeblement and attenuation, though not the ruin, of the will, the *fomes peccati,* and finally the condemnations of naturalism and its different forms, nationalism and liberalism.[32]

Naturalism itself gives confirmation to this view by feeling impelled to deny the existence of the wounds of original sin, as well as the reason for mortification and the spirit of sacrifice.

80 Bk. Ill, chap. 54.

81 St. Alphonsus Liguori, *Historia haeresum,* Confutatio XII (ed. Walter, 1903), p. 4584, nos. 5, 14, 16.

82 Cf. Denzinger, 10th cd., nos. 174, 181, 198, 788, 793, 1275, 1616, 1627, 1634 fl., 1643.

ARTICLE III

THE GRADUAL HEALING OF THE WOUNDS OF ORIGINAL SIN

Our healing begins with baptism, which lessens our concupiscence, proneness to evil, and weakness for good.[33] But this healing is never quite complete in this world. As the Council of Trent[34] says, in quoting St. Paul: " 'Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall' (I Cor. 10:12). You must 'work out your salvation with fear and trembling' (Phil. 2: 12), in labor, in watching, in almsgiving, in prayer and oblations, in fasting and in chastity. You must have a holy fear, knowing well that, regenerated in the hope but not in the possession of glory, the battle is against the world, the flesh, and the devil; and victory is possible only by conforming to the grace of God, according to the words of St. Paul: 'If you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the spirit you put to death the deeds of the flesh, you will live.' " (Rom. 8:13.) Our healing will near its completion in this life only after earnest mortification, accompanied by die passive purifications of the senses and the spirit. In other words, as the lives of the saints show, it will come about only in the unitive way.

To reach diat, we must put into practice what St. Paul says: "Therefore, if you be risen with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God. Mind the things that are above, not the things that are upon die earth. For you are dead; and your life is hid with

38 Cf. ma, q.69, a.4, ad 3um.
84 Sess. VI, cap. 13.

Christ in God. When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth: fornication, uncleanness . . . anger, indignation. . . . Lie not one to another; stripping yourselves of the old man with his deeds, and putting on the new, him who is being renewed unto knowledge according to the image of Him that created him. . . . Put ye on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, the bowels of mercy, benignity, humility, modesty, patience: bearing with one another and forgiving one anodier. . . . But above all these things have charity, which is the bond of perfection." 35 In the same spirit, the great Apostle invites the Ephesians to "put on the new man, who according to God is created in justice and holiness of truth."30

Now we can see how the infused moral virtues are of an infinitely higher order than the acquired moral virtues as described by the great pagan moralists.37 We can conceive, too, what they must become in a purified soul, *virtutes purgati animi?3* And we have an explanation why the threefold concupiscence of the eyes, of die flesh, and of pride finds a perfect remedy only in the three evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience;39 and why every Christian ought to have the spirit of the counsels, even diough the circumstances of his life do not allow him to practice them effectively. Lastly, we understand die true greatness of the great commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." And we are no longer

85 Col. 3: 1-14.
88 Eph. 4: 24.
87 Ia Ilae, q. 63, a. 4.
88 tbid., q.61, a.5.
zzIbid., q. 108, a.4; Ila Ilae, q. 189, a. I.

astonished at the words of St. Augustine: "Two loves have built two cities: the love of self unto contempt of God, has built an earthly city; the love of God unto contempt of self, the City of God." [40] Contempt of self is contempt for the seeds of death existing in us, contempt for all that can separate us from God and our neighbor; it is love of self as we ought to love ourselves in order to glorify God. To destroy our egoism and all its mean little ways, we ought to love ourselves in an incomparably higher and deeper fashion, we ought to love ourselves for God, desiring to see Him as He sees Himself that we may give Him eternal glory. Then the perfect victory of Christ over sin and death will be realized in us. Our wounds will really heal. And supernatural life will so penetrate, elevate, and fortify our whole being as to fix the kingdom of God in us firmly, fully, and forever.

[40] *The City of God*. Bk. XIV, chap. 28.

CHAPTER VIII

Mortification and the Results of Personal Sin

We have seen how necessary mortification is because of the results of original sin that continue to exist in the baptized: concupiscence, proneness to evil and error, and weakness for good. Mortification is no less necessary because of the results of our personal sins; and from this point of view it proceeds especially from the virtue of penance. This virtue, under the higher inspiration of the theological virtues of faith, hope, and charity, makes temperance, particularly chastity, and fortitude and patience as well, serve to destroy sin and its residual disorders. If penance belongs to the essence of Christian life, as much must be said of mortification.

As a matter of fact, we must not forget that penance is a special virtue, with its own proper acts. If each virtue formally excludes its contrary vice, as white excludes black, penance has for its special end to work effectively for the destruction of sin, of all sin, so far as it is an offense against God that can be remitted by grace together with the cooperation of man.[1]

[1] Cf. *Summa,* IIIa, q.85, a.2: "Now it is evident that there is a special reason for praising the act of penance, because it aims at the destruction of past sin, considered as an offense against God, which does not apply to any other virtue. We must therefore conclude that penance is a special virtue." *Ibid.,* ad 3um: "Every special virtue removes formally the habit of the opposite vice, just as whiteness removes blackness from the same subject: but penance removes every sin effectively, inasmuch as it works for the destruction of sins, according as they are pardonable through the grace of God if man cooperate therewith."

For a good understanding of this, we shall consider the three chief effects of penance: (i) the remission of sin, whether mortal or venial; (2) the remission of the punishment due to sin *{reatus poenae}*; (3) the destruction of the remains or marks of sin *{reliquiae peccati}* and the struggle against temptation.

ARTICLE I

THE REMISSION OF SIN

Remission of sin, St. Thomas teaches, is effected chiefly in virtue of the passion of our Savior through the sacrament of penance, and secondarily by the acts of the penitent that appertain to the virtue of penance,[2] that is, by the acts of contrition, confession, and satisfaction, which are the proximate matter of the sacrament of penance.[3]

For a sin to be forgiven us, we must detest it for a supernatural motive. Perfect contrition, inspired by the very motive of charity or love of God above all things, remits mortal sin, even before the reception of the sacrament of penance, if we have at least an implicit desire to receive the sacrament.[4] This implicit desire is contained in the will to accomplish all that is necessary for our salvation. Imperfect contrition, or attrition, is sorrow or detestation of sin which proceeds from a supernatural motive less than charity. This motive is either the vileness of mortal sin, as an injury done to God and an evil for the soul, or fear of losing eternal happiness, of being separated from the source of all good and drawing

2 Illa, q.86, a.6.
zlbid., q.90, a.I, 2, 3; Council of Trent, sess. XIV, chap. 3.
4 Council of Trent, sess. XIV, chap. 4.

down upon ourselves the divine chastisement.[5] Even in attrition, since it excludes the will to sin and implies hope of pardon, there is supernatural love of God, as the source of all justice.[6] Alone this love does not suffice to justify us, but, united to sacramental absolution, it obtains the remission of mortal sins by the infinite merits of the passion of our Savior.

As to venial sins, they cannot be remitted without at least virtual regret for having committed them and the intention to avoid them in the future: not that in this world it is possible for us, without a special privilege, to avoid all venial sins all the time, but we can and we should avoid each in particular, and their number should obviously diminish as we progress in charity.[7] At least virtual regret for venial sins committed and a firm purpose to do whatever possible to avoid falling again are contained in any fervent act of love of God. The Our Father, the use of holy water and other sacramentals, dispose us to make fervent acts of charity and penance; so, *a fortiori,* do Holy Communion and the sacrament of extreme unction.[8]

The Imitation of Christ tells us that "through levity of heart and neglect of our defects we feel not the sorrows of the soul. . . . Happy the man who casteth away from him whatever may strain or burden his conscience. . . . Have always an eye upon thyself in the first place, and admonish thyself preferably to all thy dearest friends." [9] "As thine eye observeth others, so again thou art also observed by others. . . . Ever keep in mind thine end, that time lost returneth no

[5] *Ibid.*
[6] Council of Trent, sess. I, chap. 6.
[7] Cf. *Summa,* IHa, q.87, a. i, c. ct ad mm, ad 3um; a.2, ad 2um. *&Ibid.,* a.3.
[8] Bk. I, chap. 21.

more. . . . But if thou give thyself to fervor, thou shalt find great peace; and thou shalt feel thy labor light, through the grace of God, and for the love of virtue."[10]

ARTICLE II

MORTIFICATION AND THE REMISSION OF PUNISHMENT DUE TO SIN

The special virtue of penance does not merely bring us to detest sin as an offense against God but leads us on to make reparation for sin. To stop sinning is not enough. Satisfaction must be offered to divine justice, since every sin deserves punishment.[11]

Mortal sin, when not remitted in this life, deserves eternal punishment because it works an irreparable moral disorder by turning us away from God, our sovereign good and last end. As long as it lasts, its punishment must last.[12] When, on the contrary, mortal sin is remitted in this life and the sinner is converted, eternal punishment is also remitted; but often temporal punishment remains to be undergone. This is merited by sin, whether mortal or venial, so far as it is directed in an inordinate way toward a finite good.[13] "Tribulation and anguish upon every Soul of man that worketh evil. . . . But glory and honor and peace to everyone that worketh good."[14]

There is a profound reason why every sin merits punishment, just as every act inspired by charity merits a reward. St. Thomas explains it to us in this way:

10 *Ibid.*, chap. 25.
11 Illa, q. 85, a.3.
12 la Ilae, q.87, a.3, 4, 5.
13 *Ibid.*, a. 5.
14 Rom. 2: 9-10.

For we observe in natural things that when one contrary supervenes, the other acts with greater energy. . . . Wherefore we find that the natural inclination of man is to repress those who rise up against him. Now it is evident that all things contained in an order are, in a manner, one, in relation to the principle of that order. Consequendy whatever rises up against an order is put down by that order or by the principle thereof. And because sin is an inordinate act, it is evident that whoever sins commits an offense against an order: wherefore he is put down, in consequence, by that same order, which repression is punishment.

Accordingly man can be punished with a threefold punishment corresponding to the three orders to which the human will is subject. In the first place a man's nature is subjected to the order of his own reason; secondly, it is subjected to the order of another man who governs him either in spiritual or in temporal matters, as a member either of the state or of the household; thirdly, it is subjected to the universal order of the divine government. Now each of these orders is disturbed by sin, for the sinner acts against his reason, and against human and divine law. Wherefore he incurs a threefold punishment; one, inflicted by himself, namely, remorse of conscience; another, inflicted by man; and a third, inflicted by God.[18]

Here we have the basis for the virtue of penance, and the reason why reparation or satisfaction for offenses committed against God are due Him in justice. Every sin merits punishment, whether voluntary or involuntary. The vindictive justice of a judge inflicts punishment on the guilty against his will to make the principles of the law respected. Penance is that part of justice which impels the guilty either to submit voluntarily to punishment or to impose on himself whatever punishment he has merited. Although unable to offer God

15 Ia Ilae, q.87, a. 1.

reparation absolutely equal to his offense, he does offer a satisfaction proportionate to his own capacities. This derives its value from the love inspiring it and, even more than that, from the merits of Christ, the principle of our justification.[16]

Sacramental absolution takes away sin, but a penance or satisfaction is imposed on us besides, that through it we may obtain remission of the temporal punishment which ordinarily remains to be undergone, even when die sin itself has been remitted. Satisfaction is part of the sacrament of penance, and in this capacity does its share to restore or to increase grace.[17] By it the sinner pays in part at least the debt contracted with divine justice. For the same end he should also bear patiently the sufferings of life, and if his patience does not suffice to purify him entirely, he will have to pass through purgatory, for nothing defiled can enter heaven.

The dogma of purgatory serves as a strong confirmation of the necessity for mortification because it shows us diat we must pay our debts either in this life while meriting, or after death without meriting. This fact makes the author of *The Imitation* say: "Didst thou also well ponder in thy heart the future pains of hell or purgatory, methinks thou wouldst bear willingly labor and sorrow, and fear no kind of austerity." [18] On the contrary, repentance full of love washes away both sin and punishment, like those happy tears Christ blessed by saying: "Wherefore I say to thee: Many sins are forgiven her, because she hath loved much." [19]

For the adult who receives it properly, baptism remits both all his sins and all the punishment due to them, for the bap-

16 Illa, q.85, a.3, c. ct ad 2um, ad 3um; Suppl., q. 15, a.i.
17 Illa, q.86, a. 4, ad 2um; Suppl., q. 10, a. 2, ad 2um.
18 Bk. I, chap. 21.
18 Luke 7: 47.

tized receives at that moment everything that should be produced in him by the power of the Savior's passion. By absolution, on the other hand, we receive the effect of the Passion according to the mode of our own proper acts, which are the matter of the sacrament of penance and so cooperate in our restoration; that is why the remission of the punishment is complete only when the acts of penance, satisfaction included, are complete.[20]

According to the fervor of his contrition, the justified penitent recovers a grace either higher than, or equal to, or less than the grace he lost.[21] Merits lost by mortal sin revive according to the fervor of contrition.[22] And the fervor of a penitent's contrition and first satisfaction alone can be such that all the temporal punishment due to sin is instantly remitted, sometimes together with all the remains of sin, as evidently happened in the conversion of Magdalen.[23]

ARTICLE III

DESTRUCTION OF THE REMAINS OF SIN BY MORTIFICATION

Even after being remitted, sin generally leaves its traces in us, especially when, through repetition, it engenders a bad habit, a vice. Absolution does indeed wash away the sin and convert our will towards God, but we still have an inclination to fall again into a fault often committed. This inclination

20 Cf. *Summa,* IIIa, q.86, a.4, ad 31m.

21 IIIa, q.89, a.2.

22 *Ibid.,* a.5, c. et ad 3um.

23 IIIa, q.86, a.5, ad 1um: "He (God) sometimes turns the heart of man with such power that it receives at once perfect spiritual health, not only the guilt being pardoned, but all the remnants of sin being removed, as was the case with Magdalen (Luke, chap. 6); whereas at other times He sometimes first pardons the guilt by operating grace, and afterwards, by cooperating grace, removes the remnants of sin by degrees."

is no longer as strong as it was before contrition, but it continues to exist in some measure, just as the *fomes peccati,* the tinder for sin, although diminished by baptismal grace, remains in the baptized.[24]

Daily experience shows that this is so. A man who has formed the habit of drunkenness, on being converted, receives through absolution the infused virtue of temperance, together with sanctifying grace; but he does not have the corresponding acquired virtue. On the contrary, he has as inclination to fall again into the sin so frequently committed. And he will fall into it again if he does not avoid its occasions and fails to have recourse to earnest mortification, to destroy the remains of sin now impregnating his temperament.

The same diing can be said of unresisted antipathies and aversions that have grown in our hearts; even after sincere repentance and absolution, they somehow stay with us, no longer as sins but as dispositions to fall again. These remains of sin must not be simply covered over, moderated, regulated; they must be put to death, mortified. Unless they are, they will so completely impregnate our whole being that profound and grievous passive purifications will be necessary to deliver us from them. Our temperaments come under our own fashioning influence. Even our faces, after thirty, are our own creations so far as they reveal our self-sufficiency, presumption, pride, fatuity, or envy.

The remains of sin weaken us very much, leaving us languid, debilitated, and reluctant to try what virtue demands. Mortification must eradicate these evil roots and make our souls healthy, doing its part to win the recovery of all our spiritual energies.

24 Cf. Illa, q.86, a.5.

ARTICLE IV

RESISTANCE TO TEMPTATION

We need to remember that we have to fight the results of sin and also temptations that come from the spirit of the world and the spirit of evil. "Put you on the armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the deceits of the devil. For our wrestling is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the world of this darkness, against the spirits of wickedness in the high places. . . . Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth and having on the breastplate of justice: and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace."[25]

We have enemies of wonderful powers, and the evil they can do is in proportion to their strength and greatness. Remembering Aristotle's statement that a wicked man is worse than a wild beast, we may well wonder what to think of the devil. To resist him, we must have the armor of God, the virtues, "taking the shield of faith, wherewith you may be able to extinguish all the fiery darts of the most wicked one." [28] "Resist the devil; and he will fly from you." [27] On the contrary, the more we yield to him, the more he pursues us.

God permitted man, when in a state of innocence and living in divine familiarity, to be tempted by the devil, and it is true today that the devil always tempts more directly those who aspire to perfection and lead other souls there as well; for he has a keen interest in making them fall from then-height. As for great sinners, he tempts them through the flesh

25 Eph. 6:11-15.
26 Ibid., 16.
22 Jas. 4:7·

and the world, having no need to seduce them by direct action.

Our Lord Himself willed to be tempted, after the days of fasting spent in the desert, that He might teach us to resist temptation and give us strength and confidence.[28] And we see from this example that the devil does not attempt to lead a spiritual man immediately into mortal sin, but tries to bring him by way of slight faults to grave sin.

He brought Adam and Eve to evil by the temptations of pride, curiosity, disobedience, and gluttony (cf. St. Thomas IIa IIae, q. 163, a. 1, c., and ad rum, ad 2um): "Why hath God commanded you, that you should not eat of every tree of paradise? . . . No, you shall not die the death. For God doth know that in what day soever you shall eat thereof, your eyes shall be opened; and you shall be as Gods, knowing good and evil."[29]

In like manner he sought to seduce Christ by three successive temptations—desire for food after a long fast, vainglory or ostentation, and extreme pride: "If Thou be the Son of God, command that these stones be made bread. . . . If Thou be the Son of God, cast Thyself down [from the pinnacle of the temple]. . . . All these things [the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them] will I give Thee, if falling down Thou wilt adore me."[30] Following the example of our Lord, let us answer with the words of God and without argument; then temptation will become an occasion for meritorious acts of faith, trust, and love of God. In such moments we are in the happy necessity of not being able to content ourselves with acts of imperfect virtue *(remissi')*; we must have recourse to intense meritorious acts.

28 Illa, q-4i, a.i et 2.
29 Gen. 3:1-5.
30 Matt. 4:3.

The principal works of satisfaction for resisting temptation and expiating our sins are generally and fittingly distinguished as these three: almsgiving, fasting, and prayer. Every satisfaction offered to divine justice ought, for the honor of God, to deprive us of some of the goods we have abused. Now there are three kinds of goods: (1) those of the soul, which are abused by pride and which ought to be atoned for by humble prayer that bows us down before God; (2) goods of the body, which are abused by concupiscence of the flesh and which ought to be expiated by fasting; (3) exterior goods, which are abused by concupiscence of the eyes and which ought to be expiated by almsgiving.[81]

All other sins stem from the two concupiscences and pride, as from three roots; and all other works of satisfaction are reduced to the three we have just enumerated. Whatever afflicts the body, like the discipline and austerities of that kind, has the same reason for existence as fasting; watching ought to be consecrated to prayer, so as to become a true work of satisfaction; and all the works of mercy we do for our neighbor are like an almsgiving made to him.

When patiently borne, the trials of life are also, of course, a satisfaction, remitting the punishment due to sin, wiping away the traces sin leaves in us, and preserving us against temptation.

In the old religious orders, penance has an important place. Their religious, both men and women, must offer satisfaction to God not only for themselves, but for sinners who are unmindful of the necessity for reparation. All the saints have understood this truth, particularly the founders of orders, and they have never stopped reminding their children: "Miti-

81 IIIa, Suppl., q. 15, a. 3.

gate the observance, and you mitigate the spirit; relaxation of rule infallibly leads to relaxation of thought and of life. God, who inspired the rule, will not bless its decadence."[32] The world today, ravaged by so many evils, has no less need of prayer and penance than it had in the first days of Christianity, as the Blessed Virgin reminded us when she appeared at Lourdes. Reparation offered, as it should be, in a spirit of love and adoration, becomes a sublime act proceeding from the three subordinate virtues of charity, religion, and penance. It renders God the glory that sin took from Him. And by it we become closely associated with Christ, our priest and our offering, in the work of redemption.

82 The observances of orders such as St. Dominic's constitute, as it were, the bark of the religious tree, serving, despite their seemingly non-essential character, to protect the tree and keep it alive. Religious observance and study have no quarrel between them but work together as means to contemplation and divine union, the fountainhead of apostolic life.

CHAPTER IX

Two Methods of Examination of Conscience

As a practical application of the doctrine just developed concerning mortification, two methods of examination of conscience will now be proposed. Both serve to point out those things in us needing mortification and they show us also, in part at least, the obstacles we possess to divine union. Later we shall have to discuss the passive purifications of the senses and the spirit which act as a means of destroying obstacles to divine union and of configuring the fervent and generous Christian more and more to Christ crucified.

Examinations of conscience generally follow the order of the commandments and of our duties to God, to our neighbor, and in relation to ourselves. For growth in self-knowledge, it is useful sometimes to vary this examination and the questions comprising it. While remembering that whenever we look at self we should always keep our gaze on God, the exemplar of all virtue, we will find it helpful at times to examine ourselves in reference to the seven capital sins and the sins derived from them, and at other times, on the contrary, by considering the hierarchy of the virtues that constitute the different functions of our spiritual organism. It is important, too, for us not to neglect the relation between the interior life and external behavior.

ARTICLE I

AN EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE SEVEN CAPITAL SINS

An examination of conscience concerning the capital sins and their consequences can easily be made by using die enumeration given by St. Thomas[1] following St. Gregory die Great. As organized under the following headings, the sins called capital because diey are the head or principle of all the others reveal themselves as derived from the three concupiscences spoken of by St. John the Apostle. They are called capital not because they are the gravest of all sins but those toward which we are most inclined and which lead to estrangement from God and still graver wrongdoing. Vainglory, for example, leads to disobedience, hyprocrisy, and animosity. And animosity is the principle of discord and obstinacy in heresy. No man reaches complete perversity all at once; he is led there step by step.

St. Thomas says that every sin originates in egoism.[2] Inordinate love of self prevents us from loving God above all things and prompts us to turn away from Him. From inordinate self-love proceed the three concupiscences of the flesh, the eyes, and the pride of life. From the three concupiscences the capital sins, the principles of all the others, are derived.

This outline shows us how the capital sins are the principles of all other sins, and themselves spring from pride and concupiscence: pride turning us away from God, and con-

1 *Summa,* la llae, q.77.
2 *Ibid.,* a. 4, 5.

Vainglory, from which arise disobedience, boastfulness, hypocrisy, contention, discord, eccentricity, and obstinacy. Vainglory has as a further consequence the following sin:

Sloth, a disgust for spiritual things and the work of sanctification. It is contrary to the love of God and gives birth to malice, spite, faintheartedness, despair, spiritual sluggishness, neglect of the commandments, and the seeking for unlawful things.

Envy, or sadness at another's good as though it subtracted from our own exaltation. From it come hatred, tale-bearing, detraction, joy at another's misfortune, and grief at his prosperity.

Anger, which is opposed to meekness and from which are born quarreling, swelling of the mind, contumely, clamor, and blasphemy.

Covetousness, which is contrary to liberality and often to charity and justice as well, and from which are derived treachery, fraud, falsehood, perjury, restlessness, callousness, and violence.

Gluttony, which engenders unseemly joy, scurrility (buffoonery), uncleanness, loquaciousness, and dullness of mind.

Lust, the contrary of chastity, from which proceed blindness of mind, thoughtlessness, rashness, inconstancy, self-love, hatred of God, and an attachment to the world destructive of any hope in a future life.

cupiscence inducing us to seek our highest happiness in earthly goods.

We see, too, the importance of humility, how it well merits being called the fundamental virtue because it checks pride.

Pride is, in fact, the source of all other sins in the sense that the act of turning away from God found in every mortal sin appertains more directly to pride than to any other sin. Inordinate love of our own excellence makes us refuse submission and obedience to God.[3]

A thoughtful reading of the preceding classification will reveal how vainglory can bring us by degrees to terrible falls, even to apostasy. It leads first to disobedience and boastfulness, then stoops to hyprocrisy to hide its ugly inner core, turns then to contention and discord and, in matters of doctrine and religious practices, prompts us to eccentricity to the point of clinging obstinately to error and even to heresy.

Another consequence of vainglory is the capital vice of sloth, disgust for spiritual tilings and the work of sanctification. This sin goes directly contrary to the love of God and the holy joy resulting from love. When a man's life no longer mounts towards God, it starts to go down the path away from Him; the man's soul is weighed down with sadness, with a disgust for holy things. Not only weakness but malice may follow, showing itself in spite toward neighbor, fainthearted-ness before duty, slackness and sloth in spiritual matters. The same discouragement that leads the spiritual sluggard to neglect the commandments sets his mind hunting a refuge in forbidden things. By losing their footing on the slope of pride, vainglory, and sloth, many unfortunately have abandoned their vocation, forgotten the promises they made to God, and started down the way of damnation.

This kind of consideration of the sources of sin makes it possible for us to avoid two contrary faults in the examination of conscience. On one hand, we are forewarned against the

s IIa IIae, q. 162, a. 7.

carelessness of the quietists, who called examination of conscience useless, under the pretext that the heart of man is so inscrutable that he can know it only superficially. They even said, and this statement has been condemned, that "all reflection on self is harmful, even the examination of our sins," and they added that it is a grace from God no longer to be able to reflect on our sins.[4] The rejoinder to this statement is easy: precisely because the nature of our interior dispositions is so difficult to know, we must examine them well and ask for divine light to discern whether they are as upright as we would have them be.

On the other hand, we thus avoid the meticulous searching for every least fault taken in its materiality, a search apt to lead to scrupulosity and sometimes to the neglect of really important things. Statistical compilation is beside the point here. To cure a skin eruption no doctor sets about counting every pimple on the surface of the skin. He looks for the source of the trouble and tries to remedy it. We do wisely not to neglect contemplating God lest we may spend too much time considering our own soul. We have no need to anticipate divine prevenient grace but only to follow it faithfully as duty requires.

Self-examination in the way just described, especially through considering the capital sins in relation to spiritual things, as St. John of the Cross does,[5] helps the soul to discover its predominant fault, the source of its other failings. Some people are more prone to pride, others to spiritual sloth, others to sensuality, others to impatience or anger, or even to excessive natural activity insufficiently ordered to God, to

4 Denzinger, nos. 1230 fl.
5 *The Dark, Night,* Bk. I.

fruitless agitation which makes them forget their last end, the one thing necessary: to love God above all things.

The people who live with us generally know our predominant fault well enough. Often it stands in their way as a hindrance to the common good. We ourselves should be able to recognize it and, if the superficiality of our self-examination prevents that, we should bear with having others call it to our attention.

ARTICLE II

EXAMINATION OF CONSCIENCE WITH REFERENCE TO THE HIERARCHY OF THE VIRTUES

For us to know our predominant fault is not sufficient; it is expedient for us besides to examine ourselves in regard to our fidelity to the principal inspiration by which God draws us to Himself. In the order of salvation we can do nothing without grace. Our Lord says: "Without Me you can do nothing." [8] We must, therefore, be attentive to the divine inspiration given to us, whether in the broad sense, that is, in every prevenient actual grace, or by inspiration properly so called, as it proceeds from the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Not only must we be attentive to the inspiration of God but we must ask to be more enlightened and more impelled by it that we may triumph over all attachment to sin and go ahead generously in the practice of virtue.

Just as every soul has a predominant fault, it has also a particular spiritual attraction, answering to the name God has given it from all eternity. In the parable of the good shepherd it is said that "he calleth his own sheep by name and leadeth

8 John 15: 5.

them out." [7] In some souls the intellect naturally dominates; they receive special graces of enlightenment and, if they are faithful to these, they will also receive a greater and greater degree of the graces of fortitude to lead them to perfection. Others climb toward the mountain peak by another approach. They receive graces which lead them to spend themselves without calculation in the service of God; in them graces of enlightenment are hardly perceptible at first and become evident only later. Others, in whom memory and practical activity dominate, receive chiefly graces of fidelity to daily duty and can be led by that way to a very high degree of perfection, to a wonderful exercise of the theological virtues and the corresponding gifts. Each soul has, in the natural order, a particularly strong aptitude, which grace delights in perfecting that it may then enlighten and enliven abilities less strong. Some people are more attracted to prayer, others to austerities, still others to the apostolate in one form or another.

Certainly no special supernatural inclination need be resisted. It ought to grow stronger, serving as a means of making a man die to sin and attain to perfection. The action of grace ought not to destroy whatever is good in our personality but should perfect it by abnegation and the cross. So saints are made. "Be supernaturally yourselves minus your faults," as an excellent director expressed it. Wisdom warns us not to imitate clumsily whatever is unsuitable for us. It is a wise David who sticks to his slingshot and lets Goliath wear the armor.

Frequent self-examination by the yardstick of the virtues will help us to attain to being ourselves minus our faults. The

[7] *Ibid.*, 10: 3.

virtues are, as it were, the different functions of our spiritual organism. By considering them we understand better the things within us opposed to their perfection.

In the outline that follows, the hierarchical character of the virtues stand out. At the top is charity, the highest of the theological virtues. Directly beneath the theological virtues we find prudence, and under prudence the moral virtues, which it directs. Beside the virtues are their opposites, the contrasting vices which, because of this contrast, show up more clearly in their ugly gravity.

We can picture the hierarchy of the virtues as the spiritual edifice of traditional symbolism. The necessary excavation made for its foundation represents humility. This must be dug not once and for all as in house building but worked at until the end of life, for the spiritual edifice is in fact a growing organism and the taller it gets the farther its roots must reach into the earth. The dome of this temple is supported by the twin columns of faith and hope. The keystone of its great value is love of God, charity, the highest virtue and life-giver of all the rest. Opening inward, two great doors swing on four great hinges or *cardines,* the four cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. The wrought iron about these hinges is the annexed virtues. Justice is companioned by religion, penance, obedience, truthfulness; fortitude by magnanimity, patience, and perseverance; temperance by chastity, meekness, and humility. For each cardinal virtue there is a corresponding gift of the Holy Ghost, symbolized by a precious stone set in the door. And into the column of faith is fastened the sconce of the gift of understanding, and from the keystone of the vault swings the lamp of wisdom, illuminating the whole interior.

Charity	towards God, and the gift of wisdom	disgust for spiritual things
	towards neighbor, and mercy	envy, discord, scandal
Hope	confidence, abandonment, and the gift of fear opposed to presumption	presumption
		despair
Faith	and the spirit of faith, and the gifts of understanding and knowledge	infidelity, blasphemy, blindness, culpable ignorance
Prudence, docility to good advice, and the gift of counsel		imprudence and negligence, carnal prudence, craftiness
Justice and the annexed virtues of religion (gift of piety), of penance, of filial piety, of obedience, of gratitude, of truthfulness, of fidelity, of liberality		injustice, impiety, superstition, hypocrisy, lying
Fortitude and the gift of fortitude, with the annexed virtues of magnanimity, patience, and perseverance		foolhardiness, meanness, pusillanimity
Temperance (sobriety and chastity) and the annexed virtues of meekness and humility		intemperance, lust, anger, pride, curiosity

The final important point to be made regarding methods of examination of conscience is that the relationship between the interior life and external behavior should not be neglected. Some directors have beginners pay a great deal of attention to their deportment at prayer, while assisting at Mass, when receiving the sacraments, in dealing with their superiors, their equals, and, as a matter of fact, in every situation. This is as it should be, but carried to excess such a method leads to a

certain hypocrisy, to neglect of the interior life while keeping up appearances. Our Lord said: "When you fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For tliey disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." [8]

Reacting against this excess, others do not give enough attention to external behavior and, as their souls are not united closely enough to God, their ways leave much to be desired. They wish to "skip a grade" and, through unconscious pride, do not take sufficiently into account those things that are useful or necessary for both beginners and proficients. Man, being composed of spirit and body, knows spiritual and interior things only in the mirror of sensible and exterior things, *in speculo sensibilium*. The latter, while remaining quite secondary, ought to be given their proper place in the scheme of things.[9]

Here again truth rises like a mountain top above and between two contrary tendencies. It rests on the principle that the end sought, though first in the order of intention, comes last in the order of execution. A man putting up a building first sees its noble beauty as an idea in his own mind. Then he decides on whatever means are necessary to have it built, neglecting nothing and beginning with the meanest part of the work, for the foundations have to be laid. All the time, little by little, at every stage of the undertaking, he is pushing on to the realization of the end he desires to obtain. In the same way, a man who desires a doctorate must first follow a course of study in a graduate school, and before he can do even that he must register diere.

8 Matt. 6: 16.
8 IIa IIae, q.8i, a.7.

The same can be said of man's approach to perfection. Although reached at die very last, the end of the interior life has to be first in the order of intention, and widi the help of grace efficaciously willed. Those who lean to preoccupation with externals need to remember this fact.

On the contrary, when we start to put our intention into execution, we must not neglect the little means so necessary for beginnings. We must give real attention to our external behavior, the framework, as it were, of our spiritual life. Without exterior recollection, union with God is impossible, and unless we practice humility externally we shall never come to possess true humility of heart.[10] Our inner life and outer conduct are interrelated, as are die physical and the moral, the sensible and the intelligible, the image and the idea, the passions and the will. The image precedes the idea, which is abstracted from it; then afterward the image serves to express the idea.

Bodily worship and vocal prayer dispose us for mental prayer, which then animates psalmody and the liturgical chant. The interior surely has the primacy; yet the exterior cannot be neglected without real loss to ourselves and probably scandal to our neighbor.

By means of this twofold examination of conscience, we come to see plainly the necessity both for mortification and for those passive purifications or crosses which God sends us to cleanse us from all attachment to the world and to self that our love for Him may take first place in our soul and be

[10] *Ibid.*, q. 161, a.6, ad aum: "Man arrives at humility in two ways. First and chiefly by a gift of grace, and in this way the inner man precedes the outward man. The other way is by human effort, whereby he first of all restrains the outward man, and afterward succeeds in plucking out the inward root. It is according to this order that the degrees of humility arc here enumerated."

reflected in all our acts. By whatever form we examine ourselves, we do well not to look at ourselves without keeping our eyes on God, the exemplar of all perfection. This look at God is a look of faith, perfected by the gift of wisdom, and it makes us judge all things in relation to God, the first cause of our salvation and our last end.

In thinking about the divine perfections of truth, beauty, love, justice, and mercy, we see the misery of man and the disorder of sin the better for this contrast. In thinking about the book of life and the whole story of our own fife written there with absolute truth, we can see more clearly, and as if from above, how much we have been of and for ourselves through pride, vanity, jealousy, and concupiscence instead of being of and for God, *ex Deo nati,* by humility, meekness, tire spirit of faith, hope, and charity. Made in this way, examination of conscience tends to become transformed into prayer, into prayer that begs for efficacious grace to enter again into intimacy with God.11

11 In *The Cloud of Unknowing,* written by an English mystic of the fourteenth century, we read (chap. 39): "Prayer in itself is nought else, but a devout intent directed unto God, for the getting oFgood and the removing of evil. And therefore, since it so is that all evil is comprehended in sin (either by cause or by being) let let us therefore, when we will intently pray for the removing of evil, cither say, or think, or mean, nought else and no more words, but this little word SIN. And if we will intently pray for the getting of good, let us cry, either with word or with thought or with desire, nought else and no more words, but this word GOD. For in God is all good, both by cause and by being. . . .

"But although the shortness of prayer be greatly commended here, nevertheless the ofteness of prayer is not therefore restrained. For as it is said before, prayer is made in the length of the spirit; so that it should never cease till the time were that it had fully gotten that that it longed for." See, too, chaps. 5, 9, 36 ff., 74 ff.

CHAPTER X

Mortification and our Supernatural End

Having shown the necessity of mortification for destroying the results of original and personal sin, we now consider how mortification serves to subordinate our natural activity perfectly to the life of grace, that we may never lose sight of the infinite sublimity of our supernatural end.

Had man been created in a purely natural state, with a body and an immortal soul but without the life of grace, he would have had to discipline his passions, submitting them to right reason and will. He would also have had to submit these higher faculties to God, the author of his nature, to whom his first love as a faithful servant would have been due. And he never would have known God except by the reflection of His perfections in the mirror of His creatures. But it pleased the Most High in His infinite goodness to call us to an incomparably higher last end, to call us to see Him directly, face to face, as He sees Himself, and to love Him as He loves Himself. It pleased Him to have us participate in His intimate life and, even in this world, to possess the beginning of eternal life in the life of grace, for grace is the seed of glory.

It follows that man in his every deliberate act should live not only in a reasonable but in a supernatural way, since everything he does should be ordered at least virtually to his

last supernatural end, the goal of his journey.[1] We ought to live as reasonable beings and also children of God redeemed by His only Son. We must not only submit our passions to reason but subordinate reason itself to faith, to the spirit of faith, and subject all our natural activity to the life of grace and charity, in fidelity to the Holy Ghost.

Our supernatural end, because of its infinite sublimity, demands the mortification of the first interior movements of concupiscence, pride, anger, jealousy, and envy. It requires even the mortification of natural activity which, though not plainly reprehensible, would not hesitate to push its own development to the detriment of the life of grace. What is generally meant in ascetical language by natural activity is activity insufficiently subordinated to our last supernatural end, unsanctified activity, activity stemming almost entirely from an extroverted temperament, from natural enthusiasm, poorly disciplined curiosity, and a need for diversion, influence, and recognized and enjoyed success. People of this type, while no doubt doing good, unconsciously tend to make themselves the center of things, to attract souls to themselves instead of drawing them to God. They forget the words of the Master, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His justice; and all these things shall be added unto you."[2]

Natural activity can be developed to a point where its detrimental effect on the life of grace is astonishing. Christians of great literary, scientific, and legal education whose faith has scarcely developed at all since their first Communion are

1 Cf. *Summa,* Ia Hae, q. 18, a. 9. In the concrete no deliberate act is indifferent, that is, neither morally good nor morally bad. Some acts, like walking, are indifferent with regard to their object, but they are either good or bad because of their end, for whatever a man does must be done for some good end, itself subordinate to the last supernatural end, which is to be loved above all others.

2 Matt. 6: 33.

not few and far between. And even when they have managed to keep the faith, it is so unenlightened and weak, so out of proportion to their natural activity, that it has little defense against the dangers which surround it. Giants in scholarship are often spiritual dwarfs.

People devoted to the active apostolate or to study, even to the study of philosophy, theology, exegesis, or canon law, may allow themselves to be so taken up with natural activity that the life of grace, the spirit of faith, influences them but little. Overworked, ridden with too human preoccupations, they seem to be living intensely when, in the eyes of God, they are supernaturally sick unto death.

Men with an infinitely sublime supernatural end require mortification that no merely natural man can understand. The perfection of charity requires it. And by the great commandment every Christian is committed to perfection, not as being bound to realize it immediately but as ceaselessly tending toward it in his own state of life.[3]

In the Sermon on the Mount our Lord has something to say on this subject. It would be well for us to consider His words in relation to the first inordinate movements of our natural appetency and, later, to what ascetical doctrine calls "natural activity."

ARTICLE I

MORTIFICATION AND OUR INORDINATE TENDENCIES

Because our Lord wished to show the excellence of the new law, the law of love and grace, and its superiority over the Old Testament law of fear, He put insistent stress on the

[8] IIa Hae, q. 184, a.3.

sublimity of our supernatural end by beginning the Sermon on the Mount with the eight beatitudes: "Blessed are the poor in spirit ... the meek. . . . Blessed are they that mourn . . . they that hunger and thirst after justice . . . the merciful . . . the clean of heart . . . the peacemakers. . . . Blessed are they that suffer persecution for justice' sake; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." [4] They will be comforted, satisfied, they will obtain mercy, they will see God, they will be called His children, they will have a great reward in heaven.

How can men attain an end as high as the eternal life of God Himself? They must begin to live it in this world by grace: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." [5] For such perfection real mortification is necessary and it must be exercised not only in our outer life but especially in our inner life, where it deals with the beginnings of every unregulated movement of concupiscence, anger, hatred, pride, and hyprocrisy.

The true Christian is not to keep resentment or animosity in his heart. "If therefore thou offer thy gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar and go first to be reconciled to thy brother; and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift." [6] "Be at agreement with thy adversary betimes." Looking on an adversary, we must see a brother and a son of God. Blessed are the meek.

The evil looks and desires of concupiscence by which a man commits adultery in his heart must be mortified. "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out; . . . thy right hand . . .

[4] Matt. 5: 1-10.
[5] *Ibid.*, 48.
[6] *Ibid.*, 23 f.

cut it off. . . . For it is expedient for thee that one of thy members should perish, rather than that thy whole body go into hell."[7] The right eye that serves as an occasion for sin may be a really evil thought that comes to us under the pretext of having some value for our apostolate; it may be a friend, an adviser, even a father, astray himself and apt to lead us into evil. Our Lord could not have expressed Himself more forcefully to show our danger: "If thy right eye scandalize thee, pluck it out." We can resort, if need be, to corporal austerities, to fasting, watching, the discipline, and find in them great liberty of spirit.[8]

Every disordered desire for vengeance must be mortified. "You have heard that it hath been said: An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth. But I say to you not to resist evil." The Christian reacts to injury not by a bitter desire for revenge and, although out of duty he must resist unto death any evildoer attempting to lead him into sin, he is to endure injury with patience and without irritation or hatred. "If one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other; and if a man will contend with thee in judgment and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him." In other words, the Christian is warned to be ready to endure injustice with forbearance. The apostles, as founders of the Church, fittingly had to meet the terrible blow of persecutions that through their heroic constancy and goodness many might be converted. But patience in bearing injuries is not reserved for apostles but is recommended to all Christians. No other means serves so well to mollify and win over an angry adversary.

A Christian should be less concerned with jealously de-

[7] *ibid.*, 29.
[8] Ha Ilae, q.147.

fending his rights than with gaining over to God his angry brother. His special charta is not the declaration of the rights of man but the Gospel. The greatness of Christian justice is made manifest by its union with charity. To the man who would take away our tunic we would do well to give our cloak also, rather than to take action that will set souls deeply at variance with one another. Contention should be avoided by all; litigation by the perfect, unless the circumstances place them under the obligation of protecting the higher interests of those committed to their keeping. But if they cannot yield in a matter of their duties, they can yield concerning their rights, as the saints have always shown us.

Egoism and self-will must be mortified by great charity: "Whosoever will force thee one mile, go with him other two. Give to him that asketh of thee; and from him that would borrow of thee, turn not away." When anyone asks some help or service, be ready, out of kindness, to give him even more than he asks. When it is a question of your earthly goods or the good of your neighbor's soul, do not cling to what is yours.

Hatred, even toward our worst enemies, must be mortified. Not only supernatural patience and forgiveness of injuries but love of enemies is required of us. "I say to you: Love your enemies; do good to them that hate you; and pray for them that persecute and calumniate you; that you may be the children of your Father who is in heaven. . . . For if you love them that love you, what reward shall you have? Do not even the publicans this? And if you salute your brethren only, what do you more? Do not also the heathens this?" Charity has a formal motive infinitely higher than that of natural friendship.

We love those who do good to us as naturally as we are inclined to hate those who do us evil and to remain indifferent to those indifferent to us. Natural love makes us love our neighbor for his good natural qualities and for the benefits we receive from him. The formal motive of charity is altogether different, since charity demands that we love even our worst enemies supernaturally. We must love them with the same supernatural and theological love we have for God, being reminded by faith that our enemies, if not actually children of God, are called to become so, divine grace urging them to conversion. We ought to pray for them to be converted, to be saved. We ought to wish them, like ourselves, to reach the goal of their journey, the life of heaven, through the blessing and help of our common Father, whom all of us are to glorify eternally. To love our neighbor in this supernatural manner when we are suffering at his hands, we must look at him with the eyes of faith, seeing him as a son of God, and, for love of God, wishing him the true and imperishable goods of die supernatural life. All this evidently requires mortification of every inclination to antipathy, aversion, and rancor. When the fire of charity has destroyed these dispositions in us, then will that great virtue really take first place in our souls and animate our every action.

Finally and forcefully, our Lord makes a special demand of those consecrated to God to mortify every least inclination to hypocrisy and spiritual pride, for if our justice does not surpass that of the scribes and Pharisees, we shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven. “Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them; otherwise you shall not have reward of your Father who is in heaven. Therefore when thou dost an almsdeed, sound not a trumpet before thee,

as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets."[9] "When ye pray, ye shall not be as the hypocrites that love to stand and pray in the synagogues and corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. . . . And when thou fast, be not as the hypocrites, sad. For they disfigure their faces that they may appear unto men to fast. Amen, I say to you, they have received their reward."[10]

Christ points out to us the true spirit of mortification—death to sin and its results through love of God. "But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thy head and wash thy face, that thou appear not to men to fast, but to thy Father who is in secret. And thy Father who seeth in secret will repay thee."[11] Anoint your face, with the oil of charity, mercy, and spiritual joy. Wash your face; that is, purify your soul entirely of the spirit of ostentation and of every inordinate affection. When you do acts of piety, you are not forbidden to be seen, but to wish to be seen, for then you would lose that purity of intention which goes directly to God our Father, present in the secret sanctuary of your soul.

Pride can be mortified in another way. "Judge not, that you may not be judged. For with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged. . . . And why seest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye; and seest dost the beam that is in thy own eye?" Rash judgment, generally born of pride, reads malice into every peccadillo and fails in charity and also in justice. God alone can judge the secrets of men's hearts. When we attempt it we arrogate to ourselves a jurisdiction we do not have. Pride bribes our judgment, and we are incapable of

9 Matt. 6: I f.
10 Ibid., 5 ff.
11 Ibid., 17-18.

giving a just verdict about the man we view not as a brother but as a rival to be put down.

Of those charged with instructing others in the things of salvation, our Lord requires a very special mortification of intellectual pride. In speaking of the Pharisees, He says that they "love the first places at feasts and the first chairs in the synagogues, and salutations in the market place, and to be called by men, Rabbi. But be not you called Rabbi. For one is your Master, and all you are brethren. . . . He that is the greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be humbled; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." [12]

St. Paul speaks in the same way. "Knowledge puffeth up; but charity edifieth. And if any man think that he knoweth anything, he hath not yet known as he ought to know. But if any man love God, the same is known by Him." [13] In commenting on this text, St. Thomas says that knowledge without charity profits nothing for salvation and leads to pride. Charity must accompany knowledge, and truth must be sought not through curiosity and vainglory but out of love for God and souls. Only then will knowledge become profitable for salvation. St. Bernard says that some people desire to know merely to know, and they are curious; others, to be known, and they are vain; others, to sell their knowledge, and they are calculating; others, to be edified, and diey are prudent; still others, to edify their neighbor, and diey are charitable.

For us to avoid curiosity on the one hand and intellectual sloth on the other, mortification and a special virtue are needed. To study for love of God and souls, a supernatural

[12] *Ibid.*, 23: 6-12.
[13] I Cor. 8: 1.

end, we need the virtue of studiousness. Charity animates our study so that we will never sacrifice the principal to the accessory or the Creator to the creature in intellectual work; nor, as it too often happens, pursue a detailed, critical study of the letter of the Gospel without ever penetrating beyond the words to the very spirit of the word of God.[14]

St. Thomas insists on this point when explaining the conclusion of the Sermon on the Mount: "Everyone therefore that heareth these My words and doth them, shall be likened to a wise man that built his house upon a rock. . . . And everyone that heareth these My words and doth them not shall be like a foolish man that built his house upon the sand. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew: and they beat upon that house. And it fell; and great was the fall thereof." [15] About this the Angelic Doctor says[16] that every man must examine the foundations of his own building, the basis on which his intention rests; some listen to the words of the Gospel only to know, to edify merely the intellect, and so build on sand; others listen to put what they hear into practice, to love God and neighbor, and they build on the rock of charity. "Who then shall separate us from the love of Christ?"[17]

The Sermon on the Mount places before us the greatness of Christian morality and keeps us from losing sight of the necessity for generous mortification to reach our supernatural end. The spirit of mortification in the new law is the spirit of the love of God and of souls in God.

[14] Cf. IIa IIae, q.166.
[15] Matt. 7: 24-27.
[16] St. Thomas, *in Matthaeum*, y. 24.
[17] Rom. 8: 35.

ARTICLE II

MORTIFICATION OF NATURAL ACTIVITY

Authors of ascetical and mystical writings use the term "natural activity" to mean whatever the soul does outside of and prejudicial to the influence of grace, unsanctified activity, apt, when developed, to lead men from divine union toward practical naturalism. Commonly, people are all too unaware that they should mortify their "natural activity." Yet, to realize that such mortification is necessary, we have only to recall St. Thomas' principle that no individual deliberate act is indifferent but either morally good or morally bad.

Objectively, some acts are indifferent—taking a walk, for instance. Yet every act we do deliberately, we do for either a good or a bad end, and not to act deliberately but mechanically is hardly an ideal for man. All our deliberate acts should be at least virtually ordered to God and have such reasonable and truly good ends that they lead us finally to Him who has first claim on our love.

"No man can serve two masters. For either he will hate the one and love the other; or he will sustain the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon." [18] No one can seek two different last ends, two supreme goods.[19] "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatsoever else you do, do all to the glory of God." [20] In the Saint Gotthard range of the Alps there is said to be a watershed where every drop turns either north toward the Rhine and the North Sea or

18 Matt. 6: 24.
19 Ia Ilae, q. i, a.5.
20 I Cor. 10: 31.

south to the Rhone or the Ticino and the Mediterranean. So in our lives every deliberate act goes in the direction of good or of evil; for in the concrete reality of life neutrality in moral matters simply does not exist. We need, then, to consider the proximate and ultimate consequences of our action and our apparently good or at least inoffensive natural activity. If it is born outside the influence of grace, it will most likely grow up to do grace harm. Too often we keep the divine life in us as a kind of superstratum without bearing or influence on many of our actions which lack even virtually the spirit of faith and love.

Of the three degrees of "natural activity" the first and grossest consists in that natural ardor which makes some people undertake everything they do through impetuosity, acting with little or no reflection and with hot and hasty vigor. The boiling over of an impetuous disposition into activity in no way proceeds from grace and quickly becomes contrary to it, being trailed by disorder and followed up by trouble, incoherence, and blindness. The principle behind impulsive activwty is self-love. The desire for immediate self-satisfaction makes a man act hastily and imprudently. His agitation is the very opposite of peace, of that tranquillity of order wherein a man keeps himself in the presence of God. Because so much unconscious egoism, whether individual or that collective type we might call "nosism," enters into impulsive actions, we do well to stop or postpone beginning whatever work seems to carry us away. Group or party spirit may come to substitute for the spirit of God when we desire something good to be done but wish to do it ourselves and in our own way either personally or through our society, religious family, or community. The resultant and saddening divisions among work-

ers in the Lord's vineyard certainly dispose no one for divine contemplation.

Sometimes natural ardor manifests itself in loud, expressive enthusiasm, so tiresome to thoughtful and recollected people who recognize it as a rhinestone imitation of the diamond of spiritual joy and as different from it as chauvinism is from patriotism or the silly, affected cult of knowledge is from love of truth. But the man of impulse is himself fooled, believing himself, when only an unformed or mediocre scholar, to be quite an authority, or, if a very ordinary administrator, an exceptional man of affairs. If a man like this is simply an inoffensive megalomaniac, he may be nothing worse than ridiculous; but if he is ambitious and reaches a high office, he can be dangerous because of the harm he can do.

The second, less gross and less dangerous, degree of natural activity may be called natural eagerness. Natural eagerness marks a man when, although he has a much more delicate conscience than the ambitious enthusiast, he does not enter enough into the privacy of his heart to listen to the Holy Ghost. Self-will slips into his activity and blocks the workings of grace. Fascination for some proximate end like study or the apostolate makes him lose sight of its relationship to the ultimate end, the glory of God and the salvation of souls. Then, not keeping his ultimate end sufficiently in mind, he no longer turns to God enough for help to do what he should, he no longer prays enough. He has forgotten the great principle St. Thomas recalled so often: the order of agents corresponds to the order of ends. No one can tend toward the last end without the concurrence of the supreme agent, the author of our salvation, God. When we see only the proximate and human end to be attained, we rarely have recourse to anything

but human effort and let our natural eagerness take control. Then if our success does not measure up to our expectations, we become sad and upset. This would not happen if, instead of acting precipitately, without counsel or precept, we awaited the movement of grace, the motive force of God's will. Many souls aspiring to perfection have this fault and fail to realize what an obstacle it is to the operation of the Holy Ghost. To overcome it we must always consult God in prayer about any important affair, asking earnestly for His light. Only thus can we become really interior souls, guided in all things by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

As our Lord led His apostles to sanctity, He corrected this fault little by little. Before the Passion, Peter said to Him: "Although all shall be scandalized in Thee, yet not I." And Jesus answered: "Amen I say to thee, today, even in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." [21] When James and John wished for fire from heaven to fall on a village that had remained deaf to God's words, He replied: "You know not of what spirit you are." [22] And St. Paul reminds us that natural activity can puff a scholar up with pride and make a preacher but sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal.[23]

The third degree of natural activity, though without passion and excessive eagerness, is a natural movement of more subtlety and therefore more difficult to know than the two others. People of well controlled passions and pure intention who consult God in prayer about anything of importance may still not wait sufficiently for the action of grace before carry-

21 Mark 14: 29 f.
22 Luke 9: 55.
23 I Cor. 13:1.

ing out some work. They seem to forget that the Holy Ghost knows the day and hour for doing.

From time to time some trace of unconscious self-love makes them judge things, not in the spirit of faith, but in a wholly natural way, so that they act in an entirely human fashion without waiting for the time willed by God. Not being contemplative enough, they forget the lesson of Psalm 39, *Expectans expectavi Dominum, et intendit mihi.* This does them more harm than they think, forming a cloud between them and God, momentarily dimming the divine light in their souls. The soul already possessed of union is for that instant somehow disfigured, commonplace, even vulgar. Overanxious to get things started, it has lost the particular assistance of the Holy Ghost and marred God's work within itself. And diat "sense" it once had for the things of God may be lost to it for a while.

When Christ foretold His terrible passion to His disciples, Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him by saying: "Lord, be it far from Thee, this shall not be unto Thee." But Jesus turned on him and said, "Go behind Me, Satan; thou art a scandal unto Me, because thou savorest not the tilings that are of God, but the things that are of men."[24] Peter had spoken too naturally, forgetting that no one can reprove the Son of God. Of course he spoke out of his love for Christ, but it was a natural reaction, not conformed to the Spirit of God; were it not for Christ's response, the devil could easily have used it to deceive Peter and prevent him from understanding the great mystery of the redemption.

The infinite sublimity of our supernatural end requires

24 Matt. i6:2af.

mortification to prevent the first disordered movements of natural activity from developing and from harming the divine life, to keep us from dissipating ourselves in externals, and to save us from forgetting the indwelling Master of our sanctification. Practiced generously, mortification will make us appreciate more and more that the contemplation of the mysteries of salvation through habitual recollection belongs to the normal way of sanctity.

We can understand why our Lord told us: "How narrow is the gate and strait is the way that leadeth to life! And few there are that find it." [25] The way of the flesh, of pride, is very wide at the start but narrows down more and more as it leads on towards hell. On the contrary, the way of the spirit begins as the narrow path of humility and abnegation but widens afterward until it becomes as immense as God Himself, to whom it leads. At its end, the full heart cries: "O how great is the multitude of Thy sweetness, O Lord, which Thou hast hidden for them that fear Thee!" [20]

St. Paul, too, tells us: "This therefore I say, brethren: The time is short. It remaineth that they also who have wives be as if they had none; and they that weep, as though they wept not; and they that rejoice, as if they rejoiced not; and they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away." [27] Therefore, to oppose the three concupiscences, the three counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience have been given to us that our lives may be "hid with Christ in God." If we follow the narrow way that grows ever wider and wider, we shall find realized within us what nature could never hope for, the fulfillment of die promise:

25 *Ibid.*, 7: 14.
20 Ps. 30: 20.
271 Cor. 7: 29-31.

"When Christ shall appear, who is your life, then you also shall appear with Him in glory." [28] "For whom He foreknew, he also predestinated to be made conformable to the image of His Son, that he might be the firstborn amongst many brethren."[29]

Tired and bruised, men will push on through the risks and hardships of mountain climbing to stand on Mt. Blanc and view its great glaciers. The vision of the divine Essence for all eternity is surely worth more mortification. "For that which is at present momentary and light of our tribulation worketh for us above measure exceedingly an eternal weight of glory. . . . Now He that maketh us for this very thing is God, who hath given us the pledge of the Spirit." [30] For us not born of flesh, nor of blood, but of God, for us who are of God—*Noblesse oblige.*

For a practical, simple, yet sublime summary of all that has been said about mortification and its relationship to the love of God and die spirit of wisdom, we now turn to Blessed Grignon de Montfort's *L'Amour de la divine Sagesse?*[1]

Not in those who live at their ease, who concede to their passions and senses all they desire, is Wisdom found; for the wisdom of the flesh is the enemy of God and those who walk according to the flesh cannot please God.[32] "My spirit shall not remain in man forever, because he is flesh." [33] All who belong to Christ, Wisdom eternal, have crucified their flesh with its vices and concupiscences and carry actually and always in their bodies the death of Christ. . . .

28 Col. 3:4.
29 Rom. 8: 29.
80 II Cor. 4: 17; 5: 5.
81 Part II, chap. 6.
82 Rom. 8:8.
88 Gen. 6: 3.

Never imagine that Wisdom, purer than the rays of the sun, enters into a soul and body stained by sense pleasures. . . . To communicate itself, Wisdom demands not partial and temporary mortification, but universal and continual mortification that is both courageous and discreet. If you would have Wisdom:

1) You must really give up the goods of this world . . . or at least detach your heart from them and possess them as though not possessing them. . . .

2) You must not conform to the outer manner of worldlings, a practice more necessary than people are apt to think.

3) You must neither accept nor follow the false maxims of the world. . . . Ordinarily worldlings will not teach sin expressly; they simply treat it as though it were either honest virtue or a matter of indifference and little consequence. This adroitness the world has learned from the devil to cover up the false and ugly face of sin, and it is this very sagacity that constitutes the malice St. John speaks of in his first epistle: ". . . and the whole world is in the power of the evil one" (I John 5:19). Now more than ever, the whole world is thoroughly penetrated with malice.

4) You must, in so far as you can, keep away from evil and dangerous companions and even devout people who stand in your way and waste your time . . . that your life may be hidden with Christ Jesus in God (Col. 3:3). Keep silence among men that you may converse with Wisdom, for a silent man is a wise man (Ecclus. 20:5).

5) To have Wisdom, you must mortify the body, not only by suffering patiently whatever sicknesses and inconveniences come to you but also by punishing yourself with fasting, watching, and the other austerities penitent saints have practiced. . . . The world rejects as useless all mortifications of the body and will do or say anything to turn saints away from practicing austerities since it knows that all of them have brought their bodies into subjection by some use of fasting and the discipline. . . .

6) Although voluntary exterior mortification is good, you must join to it, by holy obedience, mortification of the judgment and will. Obedience routs self-love, the despoiler of all things; then every smallest act becomes meritorious . . . and a man arrives surely and as though while asleep at the door of salvation. All this is reaffirmed by the great counsel: Leave all and you shall find all —in Jesus Christ, Wisdom incarnate.

CHAPTER XI

Imperfection

Before turning to the passive purifications and considering how they help to destroy the imperfections of beginners and proficients alike, we wish to return to a previously examined question[1] much discussed lately in French, Belgium, and German reviews: the distinction between venial sin and imperfection. To understand the question better, we shall compare it to another similar problem, that of the lesser of two evils.

Everyone agrees that there are imperfections distinct from venial sin in actions done without deliberation; for example, in good or, at the very least, objectively indifferent acts, done mechanically because of involuntary inattention. One man's abstraction may be another man's distraction. The absent-minded man who blunders noisily into chapel will certainly disturb diose praying there. And whenever we chant more quickly or more slowly than the rest of the choir because our minds are not on what we are doing, we annoy those around us. Life is full of such imperfections. In communities the chapter of faults is meant to remedy them, lest community life become a general torture that hinders the progress of souls toward perfection. Actions of this kind are not venial sins as long as they remain indeliberate and altogether invol-

[1] *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* pp. 429-34; *Vie Spirituelle,* September, 1923, pp. 583 *if.;* January, 1925, pp. 85 ff.

untary, but they should become less and less frequent in anyone truly tending toward perfection. Were we more closely united to God, more attentive in our duties, more delicate in regard to our neighbor, more reverential toward all that gives life value, such things would hardly happen at all. They had no place in the life of our Lord or His Blessed Mother.

Besides, we must not forget that troublesome indeliberate actions begin to be venial sins as soon as we can and should stop to consider and resolve to mend our ways but do not do so. Then our inadvertence is no longer absolutely involuntary but indirectly voluntary and partly culpable through negligence. The same is true of the first inordinate movements of sensuality or impatience. They begin to be culpable when we can and should notice and repress them but fail to do so. So far in this matter almost everybody is agreed.

The lesser good—an evil?

But all are not agreed about whether it is in itself a venial sin deliberately to choose a lesser good when we know the greater good is better in itself and also better for us here and now. The problem assumes that the choice involves no contempt of counsel, no laziness or negligence, but simply less effort, less generosity, to advance in the way of perfection.

First of all, we should note that, when people prefer a lesser good to something better both objectively and subjectively, they often make that choice through laziness and negligence and thereby, of course, commit venial sin. We also agree with Billuart that it is illicit to omit a thing better for us solely because we are not bound to do it and wish to use our liberty. This is, as the Thomists say with good reason, a desire without

a proper motive;[2] and since no individual deliberate act is indifferent (for each must have a good end or be bad) the act in question is bad.

But it is not impossible to prefer a lesser to a greater good for a legitimate, though less good, motive. Many theologians express this view as follows: "A man accepts a lawful satisfaction, like eating between meals, smoking or using snuff, purely for pleasure and without necessity. Or he prolongs useful conversations he could have shortened. All these things remain within the circle of what is licit and therefore meritorious, too; but he would have progressed much more rapidly and merited much more intensely had he chosen the other alternative."[3]

We find a similar example in the good doctor who, having assisted at Mass for nine consecutive days to obtain a special grace, notices that this half hour given to God each morning does no harm at all either to his medical studies or his practice. On the tenth morning he has this good thought: "I could continue to attend Mass daily, and it would be better in itself and better for me, although of course it is not obligatory. Not only would it do no harm to my work but it would even, in a higher sense, be good for it. My confrere assists at daily Mass without his duties as a faculty professor suffering from it and I could follow his example and thus do more good. This may be an inspiration of the Holy Ghost. It is, however, not an obligation but a counsel. I am far from despising it. I know it would be better for me to follow it but I commit no sin by employing this half hour every morning in study. I

[2] Billuart, *De actibus humanis,* diss. IV, a. 6, solv. obj. 3.
[3] Hugon, O.P., *Vie Spirituelle,* July, 1920, p. 279.

admit it is a lesser good and that, with more generosity, I could find time later for a half hour's work at my books. It is, then, less good, but still good. Let us not call something bad in itself when it is only less good in itself, and let us not say it is bad for me when it is only less good for me."

We find an analagous case in the priest who habitually makes a fifteen-minute thanksgiving after Mass and has this good thought: "If I really wished to, I certainly could give a half hour to my thanksgiving as so many of my friends do whose ministry seems much more fruitful than my own. However, I am not obliged to do it and I will not allow myself to become lazy but will study some philosophy or history at that time although that could, with more generosity, be put off until later." Surely this priest has no idea that he commits sin. Please God, he may not come to devote himself to study with such immoderate ardor that he will neglect prayer for it and let his prayer become no more than a moment of relaxation and pleasant idleness. Imperfections, especially when repeated, like lax virtuous acts, dispose us indirectly to venial sin by allowing tendencies to develop which we would do well to struggle against with more energy.*

However, to return to the question whether whatever is less good for us is bad for us, those who deny the distinction between imperfection and venial sin answer that to prefer a lesser good to one that seems better for us here and now is a venial sin, the motive for doing it cannot be legitimate, and

* Because of their lack of intensity, *actus remissi* of charity, while good and meritorious, react but feebly in combating our inordinate tendencies and in that way dispose us indirectly or *per accidens* for venial sin. If we wish to content ourselves with the mere avoidance of sin, God, who gives us beyond what is necessary, will give us fewer graces. Cf. Billuart, *De caritate,* diss. II, a. a, *de actibus remissis.*

what some people would like to call less generosity is really sloth or negligence.®

Theologians who take this stand are preoccupied with the relative side of the problem, the lesser good compared to the greater rather than the lesser good taken in itself, absolutely. They thus come to think at least implicitly that the lesser good, in comparison to what is better for us here and now, becomes an evil; and so they make no distinction between imperfection and venial sin which they view as differing only *per accidens,* lack of attention reducing sin to imperfection.

This point of view encounters serious objections in the very arguments invoked in favor of the contrary solution as proposed, among Thomists, by the Carmelites of Salamanca,® and stated in *Christian Perfection and Contemplation?* According to this second viewpoint, venial sin and imperfection are distinct in themselves, and the lesser good must be considered absolutely, as it is in itself, before being compared to something better. For example, in the case of the doctor just discussed, it would be better for him to continue going to daily Mass, but it is still good and legitimate for him to consecrate that half hour to studying medicine—an act that is good because of its object (the study to which he devotes himself without falling into either sloth or curiosity), because of its end (the care of the sick), and because of its circumstances, for we are assuming that he studies as he should, when he should, and where he should. Now, according to the prin-

s In an article entitled "Péché véniel et imperfection," *Ephemerides theol. Lovanienses,* April, 1926, p. 179, M. E. Ranwez writes: "To choose what we know without doubt to be less good for our soul is a sin."

• *Cursus theol. de peccatis,* tr. XIII, disp. 19, dub. 1, nos. 8, 9. Cf. also IIIa, q. 15, a. I, where St. Thomas shows that it would have been impossible for Christ to have had either venial sin or imperfection.

7 *Christian Perfection and Contemplation,* pp. 429-34.

ciples St. Thomas enunciated in regard to the morality of human actions,[8] this action is good in its object, end, and circumstances. It is less good than assistance at Mass but, after all, what is only less good in itself need not be called bad in itself, and what is only less good for us here and now need not be called bad for us here and now.[9]

The first reason for adopting this point of view is that human actions are specified by their objects and not by the relation of their objects to some greater good. Therefore, if the object and the motive for which it is willed and the circumstances in which it is done are all conformed to right reason, the act is good, although it may be less good than another which could be done at that time.

A second reason is based on the distinction between a counsel and a precept, a counsel by its nature not obliging but only inviting us to do what is better. And it cannot be said, as is sometimes claimed, that this is true of counsels in the abstract but not of a counsel in the concrete which, because it appears opportune to me here and now, thereby becomes obligatory. We might just as well say, as Billuart somewhere remarks, that in the concrete a counsel loses its nature, its very essence as a counsel, and becomes a command. This can no more be admitted than that a man, by being a particular man, loses his human nature. Should any counsel here and now oblige anyone, it would do so not of itself, but in a wholly accidental fashion, because not to follow the counsel would involve sloth or contempt. Sin has elsewhere been defined as any word, deed, or desire against the eternal law, whatever is contrary to a precept *sub gravi* or *sub levi.*

8 Ia Ilae, q. 18.

9 For the common teaching of Thomists concerning imperfect acts of charity, *actus remissi,* see IIa Ilae, q.24, a. 6, ad mm.

We admit that the perfection of charity falls under the great commandment to love God. "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul, and with all thy strength and with all thy mind." But perfection comes under the commandment not as matter, or as something to be immediately realized, but only as the end toward which every Christian should tend, each according to his state of life.[10] This is the sense in which every Christian ought to have the spirit of the counsels.

Sin occurs only through the transgression of a precept regarding the matter of that precept, obligatory *sub gravi* or *sub levi*.[11] Even an expedient counsel, some good inspiration about a matter of counsel, even when conformed to our vocation, does not suffice *ipso facto* to constitute an obligation. In the lives of the saints we see that the Holy Ghost sometimes makes them understand that a certain act is better for them (for example, to offer themselves as a victim for some great cause) but that they are not obliged to do it, unless they have made the vow to do what is most perfect. However, they are made to understand that, having offered themselves, they should not take back their gift. The virtuous act being specified by its object, the virtues should be considered, not apart from the commandments, but together with them.[12]

A third reason could be added: that God Himself does not always choose what is best in itself, for He can create beings

10 IIa Hae, q.184, a.3.

11 Cf. *ibid.*, ad aum: "And since that which is a matter of precept can be fulfilled variously, one does not break a commandment through not fulfilling it in the best way, but it is enough to fulfill it in any way whatever. Now the perfection of divine love is a matter of precept for all without exception, so that even the perfection of heaven is not excepted from this precept, as Augustine says (De *perf. justit.* viii), 'one escapes transgressing the precept, in whatever measure one attains to the perfection of divine love.' "

12 la Ilae, q. 18 et 19.

more perfect than those to whom He has given existence. And to save men, He was not bound, but freely willed, to choose the Incarnation. It was, of course, wonderfully fitting, but the choice of some lower means of salvation would not have implied anything unfitting. God could have contented Himself with sending us a prophet to tell us that He would pardon us under certain conditions. Likewise, despite the fact that it was fitting for Him to create, God could very well not have created. The absolute optimism of Leibnitz, who declared that God would not be good or wise had He not created, is a grave error, a heresy. Between God and ourselves there is this undoubted difference: He is not greater for having created the universe, whereas we do become better by being more generous. However, analogously is also remains true that I can refrain from acting with great liberality to a poor man and content myself with giving him merely a little money—and still commit no sin.

The three reasons just given have not been really refuted by those theologians who reject the distinction between venial sin and imperfection. Their answering objection comes to this: that the refusal of a greater good cannot be referred to God and is therefore a venial sin.

To which the reply is, that the refusal of a greater good cannot be referred to God when this greater good is obligatory or when, in a matter of the counsel, the refusal is made with contempt of the counsel or through sloth or negligence. But the same cannot be said when, for a legitimate motive, a man, to do something less good, omits some greater good that is counseled. For example, if the doctor we were speaking about a little while ago stayed away from Mass when it was not obligatory to give himself to study, even if he recognized that

with more generosity he could find time to do both, he would commit no sin. Besides, as has already been said in agreement with the theologians of Salamanca, the absence of perfection in the less generous act is not good, but the less perfect act itself is still good because of its object, end, and circumstances, and it can be referred to God. You can climb mountains by direct and difficult footpaths or by zigzaz roads that wind upward less steeply. If you choose the winding highway in preference to the short but hard assent, you move ahead more slowly to the summit but you still go on, you do not come down. What is less hot it not cold. Because ten degrees of temperature is lower than twenty, it does not equal zero.

Although we may not find it easy to distinguish between the highest degree of vegetative life and the lowest degree of sensitive life, and the question arises whether a sponge is a plant or an animal, yet the distinction between these two orders holds. The highest degree of the lower order in some way touches the lowest degree of the higher order, but the vegetable and the animal kingdoms are distinct. Likewise, in the concrete reality of life it may be anything but easy to distinguish between slight venial sins and imperfections. However, unless everything is to become confounded, there is surely a difference between what is purely and simply evil and what is only less good in itself and for us. Before comparing a lesser with a greater good, which is a relative matter, we should consider the lesser good absolutely, as it is in itself. As such it can be referred to God. Effort is indeed withheld, yet this is not to stand still on the mountainside and not to retrace the steps already taken, but only to go forward more slowly by an easier route. We have merely to recall the design made by St. John of the Cross for the ascent of Mt. Car-

mel to see that, besides the middle course, the narrow way that mounts directly and steeply to the summit by complete abnegation, and the way of the misguided spirit which leads away from God, there is a third path—that of the imperfect soul. As this route spirals its slow, sloping way up the mountainside, it offers much slower travel than the narrow way of perfection, but it still goes upward. St. John of the Cross has managed, in this design and its headings, to preserve all the nuances needed to safeguard so delicate a subject, and his doctrine prompts the generous to holy austerity without discouraging those less generous but still good.

The lesser evil

The question of the lesser evil—whether it is lawful to choose a lesser evil in order to avoid a greater—throws light on the subject under discussion. Nobody doubts that lesser physical evils may be chosen, for example, the amputation of some part of the body to save the whole. But may a man choose a lesser moral evil?

Some theologians answer affirmatively, saying that the lesser evil takes on the nature of good when compared to the greater evil to be avoided. The comparison of the lesser to the greater evil, a relative consideration, takes precedence over the consideration of the lesser evil taken in itself, absolutely. A little while back we saw how this precedence of the relative over the absolute led to a certain rigorism by confusing the lesser good with evil, and imperfection with venial sin. Now it results in a sort of laxism by confusing the lesser evil with good. Such inconsistent fluctuation between two extremes appears to be the sign and seal of relativism.

St. Thomas seems to give the solution to this problem when

he takes up the question whether lying is always a sin. The objection states that we must choose a lesser evil to avoid a greater and goes on to say that, as a doctor amputates a limb to save the body, so a lie may cause error in another's mind to prevent a homicide, since a lie works less harm than such a crime. St. Thomas gives his answer: "A lie is sinful not only because of an injury to one's neighbor, but also on account of its inordinateness, for speech is by its nature made for the expression of thought, just as the intelligence is made to know truth. Now it is not allowed to make use of anything inordinate in order to ward off injury or defect to another. . . . Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another from any danger whatever. Nevertheless it is lawful to hide the truth" [13] because hiding the truth is not speaking against it. Actually, when the saints found themselves in difficulties of this kind, since they were habitually united to God, they received from the Holy Ghost through the gift of counsel an inspiration which supplied for the imperfection in their prudence and made them avoid lying while keeping their secret when it was absolutely necessary that it be kept. Our Lord said to His disciples: "When they shall deliver you up, take no thought how or what to speak; for it shall be given you in that hour what to speak." [14]

It follows from St. Thomas' answer that no one may will something intrinsically evil in order to avoid a greater evil. Human acts are in fact specified by their objects. If the object of an act is essentially evil from a moral point of view, the act specified by it is morally bad. But if certain things or persons, a man running for some public office, for instance, possess

13 IIa IIae, q. no, a.3.
14 Matt. 10:19.

enough good for us to be able not positively to choose but merely to tolerate the evil in them, we may have recourse to them to avoid greater evils, as long as we cannot by other means avoid the evil they entail. Yet we ought to try either to find other means or to create them, so as not to prolong a critical situation and cooperate in its disorders. We have a duty, for instance, to do what we can to have good candidates run for office.

To return to the question of imperfection, it should be remarked that if the lesser evil does not become a good simply by being chosen to avoid a greater evil, neither does a lesser good become an evil simply because it is chosen in preference to something better both in itself and for us. Acts are specified by their objects. If the object is intrinsically bad, even if less bad than another, the choice specified by it is bad. If the object is good, even if less good than another, the choice specified by it is still good.

Conformity to the divine will

Conformity to the will of God differs on earth and in heaven, during our exile and in our homeland. In this life, as we travel toward eternity, we are bound to conform our will to the divine will by willing for the same motive as that for which God Himself wills—for the good and the glory of God; but, except in the case of a precept, we are not bound to will each thing that God wills, such as the death of a father when it comes time for him to die. What is actually a good from the universal viewpoint of Providence may not be good from the particular point of view of some living Christian individual or family.[15] Filial piety itself makes ys grieve to lose

15 Ia IIae, q. 19, a. 10.

father or friend, even while we submit to the divine will. Christ wept at the tomb of Lazarus. When God sends us some humiliation or temporal affliction, we do better, of course, to will the event itself, but we are not obliged to do so and need only will the accomplishment of divine justice and the order of Providence.[16]

In heaven the blessed see in God everything they are to desire and will and they not only never fail to will God's glory but they also will all that He wills so that they are no longer saddened by what would have legitimately grieved them here on earth.[17] Indeed they no longer see all things in the limited, particular way they saw them during their earthly pilgrimage, but from the higher, eternal viewpoint of divine Providence. Evidently no imperfection exists in heaven although we find it on earth and know it as distinct from venial sin. What is less white is not therefore black, the lesser good is not an evil, and less generosity becomes neither sloth nor negligence by being compared with greater generosity.

Nevertheless imperfect actions dispose us indirectly for venial sin because, as in the case of the man with five talents who acts as though he had but two, they allow tendencies to develop in us which we would do well to struggle against with more energy.[18]

Shortly an exact statement of this doctrine will be found in studying what St. John of the Cross has to say about the role of the passive purifications in perfecting souls—in beginners by means of the purification of the senses, in the more advanced through the night of the soul.

16 *Ibid.*, ad 2um.
17 *Ibid.*, end of the article.
18 Cf. Billuart, *De Caritate*, diss. II, a.2.

Difficulties about the question of imperfection

In the preceding pages the question has been asked whether not to act with the maximum generosity of which we are here and now morally capable is in itself a venial sin. Suppose I can attend Mass daily without great difficulty and know that I can, must I do so or commit venial sin? Or may I use the time which attendance at Mass would take to do some other work less good in itself and less good for me? Suppose I know it would be better for me to bind myself by vow to fast for nine days than merely to fast without making a vow, must I, under pain of venial sin, make the vow? Or, as theologians commonly teach, am I merely less generous? Is the lesser good an evil? The difficulty of the question offers no excuse for confusing good and evil, but gives us an opportunity for solving the problem through the application of self-evident principles.

To know what St. Thomas really teaches on this point, since his opinion has been invoked as contrary to the opinion generally accepted, all his texts relative to the subject should be consulted, both where he treats the question *ex professo* in the *Summa theologica,* his definitive thought expositively taught, and where the subject comes up in his other works. Having seen the reasons for his doctrine, we can then turn to an examination of opposing difficulties.

Important Thomistic texts

In his treatise on the New Law,[19] answering the question whether it was fitting to add counsels to commandments, St. Thomas says: "The difference between a counsel and a com-

[18] Ia IIae, q. 108, a. 4.

mandment is that a commandment implies obligation, whereas a counsel is left to the option of the one to whom it is given. . . . We must therefore understand the commandments of the New Law to have been given about matters that are necessary to gain the end of eternal bliss . . . but that the counsels are about matters that render the gaining of this end more assured and expeditious."

This is true not only of the three counsels properly speaking but even of the others, for at the end of the same article St. Thomas adds: "For instance, when anyone gives an alms to a poor man, not being bound so to do, he follows the counsels in that particular case. In like manner, when a man for some fixed time refrains from legitimate carnal pleasures that he may give himself to prayer, he follows the counsel for that particular time. And again, when a man follows not his will as to some deed he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case: for instance, if he do good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or if he forgive an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged."

By means of these different cases, St. Thomas shows us that, although some acts are better than others both in themselves and for the man performing them, they are still not obligatory for him at the time. They are acts which may be lawfully left undone, not merely without mortal sin but without venial sin as well. St. Thomas' meaning is plain because he has just said, "He could lawfully follow his own will." Now no one can ever lawfully commit a sin. We are, in the strict sense of the word, bound to avoid every venial sin, bound *sub levi,* according to St. Thomas and all theologians.[20]

[20] IIa IIae, q.iio, a.3, ad 41m.

The definition of sin given by St. Augustine *(dictum, vel factum, vel concupitum contra legem aeternam')* applies not only to mortal sin, but, analogically, to venial sin as well. li the latter is not against the eternal law, properly speaking, in the sense that it does not turn us away from our last end, it departs from the law as a disorder in the use of means to our last end. Consequently it is not a lesser good but an evil, and we are bound to avoid it.[21] (On this point Passerini, when appealed to in the discussion, has the same thing to say as the other commentators.) [22] The case of good but less generous acts is quite different and a man may, as St. Thomas has just said, licitly decide to do something less perfect.

In the same article of the *Summa,*[23] St. Thomas notes, as theologians commonly do, that in regard to the counsels a distinction must be made between what is better in itself and what is better for us here and now. Thus virginity, in itself more perfect than marriage, is not expedient for us all. "He that can take, let him take it." [24] Simply because of this distinction we may not conclude that, according to St. Thomas, whatever appears better here and now, not only in itself but for us, becomes by that very fact obligatory for us; for St. Thomas has just said, in the body of the same article, that at the very moment when accomplishing a better act of this

21 *De mala,* q.7, a.i, ad turn.

22 Cf. Passerini, *De hominum statibus et officiis,* q.184, a.3, no. 37; "Quaestio de voce erit disputare an peccatum veniale sit vel non contra legem, non enim de re est dubium, sed est certum adesse aliquam obligationem vitandi illud; unde dici potest quod loquendo communiter, peccatum veniale est contra legem, licet magis proprie loquendo dicatur quod est praeter legem." The other text from Passerini cited as contrary to commonly accepted doctrine has long been known to the author and seems not to emphasize sufficiently that the perfection of charity is of precept *non ut materia, sed ut finis.* Passerini admits and explains this distinction elsewhere. *Ibid.,* p. 50, no. 72.

23 la Hae, q. 108, a.4, ad lum.

24 Matt. 19: 12.

kind, we can licitly abstain from doing it. Likewise, when explaining in his *Commentary on St. Matthew* the *"Qui potest capere, capiat,"* he says: "He who has received from God the grace to comprehend the value of absolute chastity is counseled to practice it"—counseled, but not therefore obliged under pain of venial sin.[25]

As a matter of fact, the holy doctor had already noted in his *Commentary on the Sentences* [26] that a counsel never obliges of itself but only on account of particular circumstances, when it may have the force of a command. For example, someone who has not made a vow of absolute chastity may be obliged to practice it for a certain time because of circumstances.[27]

All this obviously harmonizes with the Thomistic principle already discussed at length [28] —that the perfection of charity comes under the commandment of love, not as matter or something to be realized immediately but as the end toward which all ought to tend, each according to his state of life.[28] For St. Thomas, as well as for St. Augustine, the commandment of love embraces even the perfection of charity realizable only in heaven,[30] clearly not as matter to be immediately effected but as the final end and summit toward which all should go, some with great strides, some with less, some by the steep and generous bypath of perfect abnegation where the saints climb upward, others over the gently sloping, slower route of less perfect souls.[31]

25 St. Thomas *in Matthaeum,* xix, 12: "Unde qui potest per firmitatem voluntatis capere, capiat, et non a natura, sed a Deo. Unde qui hoc a Deo habet, *consulimus* quod hoc capiat et contineat."

28 IV, d. 19, q.2, a.2, q.r, ad jum.

22IIa IIae, q. 124, a.4, ad turn.

28 Christian Perfection and Contemplation, p. 429.

29 IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 3; q. 186, a. 2, ad 2um; *Comm, in Rom.,* xii, lect. I, in medio.

80 IIa IIae, q. 184, a. 3.

81 Cf. Cajetan in lam IIae, q. 184, a. 3, no. 5.

Moreover, even in the case of religious, St. Thomas teaches in the *Summa:* [32] "Hence he who enters the religious state is not bound to have perfect charity, but he is bound to tend to this, and use his endeavors to have perfect charity. For the same reason he is not bound to fulfill those things that result from the perfection of charity, although he is bound to intend to fulfill them: against which intention he acts if he despises them, wherefore he sins not by omitting them but by contempt of them. In like manner he is not bound to observe all the practices whereby perfection may be attained, but only those which are definitely prescribed to him by the rule which he has professed."[33]

In the same article he remarks: [34] "Yet there is a certain wholeness of perfection which cannot be omitted without sin, and another wholeness which can be omitted without sin, provided there be no contempt. . . . So too, all, both religious and seculars, are bound in a certain measure to do whatever good they can . . . as required by the conditions of their state of life." [35] In other words, as expressed in the body of the article, all ought to tend toward perfection—without having to do right now whatever seems best, without being obliged to push ahead as fast as they can by the quickest and most

82 IIa IIae, q. 186, a. 2.

88 'Tile qui statum religionis assumit, non tenetur habere perfectam caritatem; sed tenetur ad hoc tendere et operam dare, ut habeat caritatem perfectam."

84 Ibid., ad 2um.

85 St. Thomas closes by saying: "Yet there is a way of fulfilling this precept so as to avoid sin, namely, if one do what one can as required by the conditions of one's state of life; provided there be no contempt of doing better things, which contempt sets the mind against spiritual progress." Between these words and the thought expressed in Ia IIae, q.108, a.4, there is no quarrel: "And again, when a man follows not his will as to some deed which he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case; for instance, if he do good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or, if he forgive an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged."

direct route, to attain at every moment the maximum generosity which they are capable of. The case would be different if they had made a vow to do always what is most perfect. The *Summa theologica* contains many other similar passages.

Moreover, not only in the *Summa* but in many other of his works St. Thomas reiterates this view. The early Thomists knew these passages well, as we can see from the *Tabula aurea operum S. Thomae* of Peter of Bergamo where, under the words *imperfectio* 38 and even more precisely, *melius,* quotations to the point are cited.37 These different passages he sums up in two propositions: first, that all are bound to aspire to what is better but not to accomplish it, for not to care for what is better is to be contemptuous of good; secondly, that all are bound to prefer the better of two goods—in judging between these goods but not in now choosing and acting upon them.

One of the characteristic passages quoted by Peter of Bergamo is from the *De veritate* and treats of conformity to God's will. The objection is made that sin consists chiefly in perverse choice or election and that to prefer a lesser to a greater good is to make a perverse choice and therefore—. To this St. Thomas makes the answer that choice involves both an act of judgment and an act of will. If in judging a man prefers what is less good to what is better, he acts perversely; but if his preference is a matter of will only, he is not bound to will

seIn the *Tabula aurea,* under the word *imperfectio* a number of passages from St Thomas are summarized in the following proposition: "Imperfectum dicitur quadrupliciter: scilicet non valens implere omnia opera sua, *tendens ad perfectionem vel non firmatus in ea,* cui deficit aliquid debitum ei, et quod non potest facere sibi simile." In the second sense given above, the word does not necessarily imply venial sin. As the references indicate, this kind of imperfection is found in good but imperfect acts and in the virtues of those still in an imperfect state, whose spiritual progress is still weak. In motion not only direction but speed is to be considered: and in the way of perfection the pace of its travelers varies.

S7 Nos. 3 and 4.

or do what is better, unless it be a matter of precept. Were this not so, every man who could follow the counsels would be bound to do so. Again in his *Commentary on St. Matthew*,[38] when considering our Lord's words, *"Qui potest capere, capiat,"* St. Thomas tells us that, although a man is obliged to aspire to what is better, he need not do it here and now.

The crux of the question

Although a divergence of opinion exists between the common view of theologians, especially the Carmelites of Salamanca, and the opposing view already set down as unacceptable here, we need to keep the proper perspective in regard to this difference and not to exaggerate it. As remarked earlier, a man often chooses a lesser good through laziness or negligence and to be lazy or negligent is to sin. Further, we agree with Billuart that not to choose what is better simply because we are not bound to do so and wish to act freely is not lawful. Although quoted as opposed to the view expressed in this present work,[38] St. Thomas' statement amounts to this—that to prefer a delectable to a true good is always sinful, because unreasonable. Even the most elementary psychology tells us such is the case of a seminarian who had a real vocation and who quits the seminary because he is seduced by the sensible charms of a cousin whom he wishes to marry. In this he resembles the young man of the Gospel who did not follow our Lord's call, being too much attached to worldly goods. Even if the call was not obligatory, his rejection of the call contained a sin, that of being too much attached to worldly goods. In the case of our seminarian his conduct involves not less generosity in forging ahead on the way of perfection but

88 In Matt. 19: it. Compare with *De veritate,* q.23, a.9, ad gum.

88 *In I Ep. ad Thess.,* v. 19; *Summa,* IIa IIae, q.54, a.3.

an evident and outright turning back on the path, whatever pretexts may be called upon to defend the action/0

A case of this kind is altogether different from the cases given earlier.41 They involve no preference of a delectable to a true good, but the choice of a true good, easier to achieve than one more difficult although realizable, as evidenced in the example of die teaching priest who daily devoted an hour and a quarter to his prayers before beginning work. Having said Prime, made his meditation, celebrated Mass and spent some time in thanksgiving, he realizes that, like some of his confreres, he could, with more generosity, give two hours to our Lord before beginning his daily tasks. But he does not do so, not through contempt of the idea or because of sloth, but to study philosophy, a thing he could do at some other time, were he more generous. On Sunday, too, having said his own Mass, he says his breviary while attending a High Mass, although with more effort he could say his breviary earlier and so perform two good works instead of one. The problem is whether such choices are always venial sins of negligence or sloth or whether they sometimes simply constitute less generosity.

If the priest's action is good, although less perfect than the alternative proposed, there is all the more reason for coming to the same conclusion about the doctor who, after making a novena of Masses, considers the possibility of continuing

40 Suppose the case concerns someone who has not yet entered the novitiate or the seminary, is it a sin for him not to answer the call to the religious or priestly life? St. Alphonsus Liquori gives us the answer: "Respondemus quod ncligere vocationem religiosam per se non est peccatum; divina enim consilia per se non obligant ad culpam. Id tamen, ratione periculi aeternae salutis, cui vocatus se committit, electionem status faciens non juxta divinum beneplacitum, non potest ab aliqua culpa excusari." In addition, as we see from the lives of the saints, divine inspiration may take the form either of a counsel or of a command.

41 See above, pp. 319 ff.

the practice of daily Mass but decides not to and devotes himself to studying medicine instead. The doctor is not, like the seminarian, retracing his steps; he is going ahead, though by an easier and slower route than he might have chosen. He is not preferring a delectable to a true good, but a true good of less worth than another which would demand more effort of him.[42]

The basis for the distinction between imperfection and venial sin

The basis for the distinction between imperfection and venial sin has already been pointed out in the Salmanticenses.[43] From the very first they remark that not St. Thomas but Scotus maintains the opinion that failure to follow a counsel is in itself a venial sin. The principal argument they use against the Scotist position amounts to what has already been said here: that no lesser good becomes evil from the fact that a man chooses it in preference to something better in itself and better, as well as more difficult, for him.[44] Everybody agrees it would be confounding good and evil to call something bad in itself when it is only less good in itself. We are not to condemn marriage because it constitutes a less perfect

42 It may be objected that if we are logical we would say that it is better for the doctor not to go to Mass at all out of devotion, for when he does he exposes himself to the danger of entertaining voluntary distractions and so committing venial sin; it would seem, then, that the better and safer thing for him to do would be to stay at home and spend his time in some interesting professional study. The answer is, of course, that assistance at Mass, even when accompanied by voluntary distractions, can be more meritorious than such study pursued without any sin whatever. The mountain climber may take some falls as he works his way up the mountain side but in the end he stands far above the man following his course without mishap along the plain below. St. Teresa pointed this out for us many times.

43 Cursus theol., de peccatis, tr. XIII, disp. 19, dub. 1, nos. 8, 9; also *De incarnatione* in IIIa S. Thomae, q. 15, a. 1, concerning the sinlessness of Christ, where it is proved that our Lord had neither venial sin nor imperfection of any kind.

44 Cf. Salmanticenses, *De peccatis, loc. cit.*

state of life than perpetual virginity consecrated to God. Likewise, we must not call things bad for us when they are only less good for us. Like the seminarian seeking a pretext for leaving the seminary so that he can marry, others, too, have abused this doctrine; but abuses of this kind take away none of the value of the argument itself which is immediately founded on the fundamental principle of all morality: the distinction between good and evil.

We must keep in mind that virtue does not consist in one indivisible unit, a maximum generosity below which there is no room for anydiing except venial and mortal sin. Virtue has its degrees. Fortitude, for example, is the just mean between cowardice and foolhardiness; but this just mean is capable of acquiring new heights without deviating either to right or left until it reaches the perfect exercise of the acquired virtue of fortitude; the infused virtue of the same name is still higher, and the gift of fortitude, higher yet. Degrees of virtue inferior to this final height are not a disorder, like venial sins of cowardice and recklessness. The disorder of venial sin (a deordination of means to our last end) is evil. A lower degree of virtue is not evil; it is good, although it has less goodness than greater virtue has.[45]

The same is true of charity. A man with ten talents of charity who acts as if he had but two talents acts imperfectly, whether it be apparent to others or not, but his imperfect acts of charity are not therefore venial sins. His actions are, as St. Thomas says, meritorious although they do not immediately

45 Anyone who, for a good motive, does some becoming action which is admittedly not as good as something else he might have done, is still imitating God Himself who, out of many possible or potential goods, has not always chosen the best, although whatever He has brought into actuality is well done. The plant is a less perfect creature than the animal but not less perfecdy organized, given the end for which it was made. Cf. la, q.25, a.6, ad ium.

obtain that increase of charity to which they give him the right.[46]

In answer to the question whether a lesser good becomes evil from the fact that it prevents a greater good, the answer is No, unless the good it prevents is obligatory. But no single good, simply because it is greater than another, is here and now obligatory, as St. Thomas tells us. Our Lord has inspired some of the saints to offer themselves as victims for some great cause, at the same time making them understand they were free to do it or not, but that once having made the offering they should not take back their gift.

Not to follow a good counsel because of sloth or negligence or a spirit of contradiction or to respond to a counsel with light-hearted contempt is certainly sinful. Such sins can become habitual and lead to a real lack of judgment. Nevertheless a man can omit following a good counsel that he may do something less good but still legitimate because inspired by a good motive. In such an instance, according to the principle that acts are specified by their objects, the act is good in its object, its end, and its circumstances, as in the case of the doctor referred to earlier. All the arguments educed are still maintained, with special emphasis on the fact that, if we confound the lesser good with evil, we must logically, as relativists, come to admit that a lesser evil is therefore a good.

As the Carmelites of Salamanca remark, what we call an imperfection is an act lacking perfection. The absence of perfection in the action, taken formally, cannot be good (for it lacks being, and being and goodness are really identified); were the privation of something obligatory the act would constitute a sin; but if there is no immediate obligation, there is no sin but only the absence of higher perfection, of greater

[46] IIa IIae, q.24, a.6, ad ium.

generosity, as in an imperfect act of charity.[47] St. Thomas tells us exactly the same thing: "And again, when a man follows not his own will as to some deed which he might do lawfully, he follows the counsel in that particular case: for instance, if he does good to his enemies when he is not bound to, or if he forgives an injury of which he might justly seek to be avenged." [48]

We read also: "It belongs to a well-disposed mind that a man tend to perfect righteousness, and consequently deem himself guilty, not only if he falls short of common righteousness, which is truly a sin, but also if he falls short of perfect righteousness, which sometimes is not a sin."[48] In other words, a humble man may call his lack of perfection a sin when it is only an imperfection. On the other hand, St. Thomas also leaves us this statement: "Therefore it is not lawful to tell a lie in order to deliver another from any danger whatever." [50] To lie to get another out of great danger is always a venial sin and not merely an imperfection. We are allowed to hide the truth but we may not speak against it.

A Christian mother who loves God above all things with the love of esteem but loves the child in her arms more intensely, more emotionally, loves imperfectly but not sinfully. The intensity of her mother love simply results from the condition of our nature, more attracted by the visible and the concrete than by the invisible, even when incomparably more precious. In heaven, where we shall see God face to face, we shall be freed from this imperfection. Meanwhile, on earth, we should tend toward loving God with the intensity of heaven just as we tend toward heaven itself.

47 Cf. Salmanticenses, *De peccatis,* disp. XIX, dub. I, no. 8.
48 Ia Ilae, q. 108, a. 4.
49 IIa Ilae, q. 113, a. 1, ad aum.
50 Ibid., q. no, a. 3, ad 4um.

To lack this intensity here is not, however, a venial sin.

Admittedly, some casuists have made wrong use of the distinction between imperfection and venial sin, being too ready to see imperfection where venial sin really exists. However, the distinction itself was not invented by them but was given by good spiritual authors, both ascetical and mystical, who have leaned neither toward laxism nor toward negligence but have studied attentively all the subtleties of human actions, calling attention not only to venial sins but even to what should be avoided in order to advance with generosity on the way of perfection.[51]

The imperfections we should especially eliminate are those St. John of the Cross finds existing in the proficient. These the passive purifications should destroy. The saint says that, while the narrow way of complete abnegation mounts straight toward the summit to be attained, the way of the imperfect but not wayward spirit is a winding road where the traveler goes ahead with less effort, less speed, and less success. We ought to have a keener appreciation of the reason why he wrote on the diagram at the beginning of the *Ascent of Mount Carmel* all along the way followed by the imperfect soul: "Not having taken the straight way I push on slowly and shall not reach the heights I might have attained." On the contrary, on the footpath which goes straight to the top, he wrote: "Nothing, nothing, nothing. . . . Since I desire nothing through self-love, everything is given to me without my seeking for it. Since I am attached to nothing, I find that nothing

51 The opposite opinion may seem the better at first sight and formerly had some appeal for the author. Further reflection seems to show that it detracts from the greatness of Christian perfection, not giving enough thought to the imperfections of the advanced souls as St. John of the Cross points them out in treating of the dark night of the soul. Above and beyond evil, before coming to perfection, we find the lesser good which we do well to surpass by pushing on toward perfection with ever-increasing generosity. Cf. Cajetan, *De indulgentiis,* q.3, initio.

is lacking to me." The lesser good is not an evil, but in all truth a lesser good.

Of those who fail to rid themselves of these imperfections, St. John of the Cross says that they suffer "from a deadening of the mind and the natural roughness which every man contracts through sin, and the distraction and outward clinging of the spirit, which must be enlightened, refined, and recollected by the afflictions and perils of that night. These habitual imperfections belong to all those who have not passed beyond this state of the proficient; they cannot co-exist, as we say, with the perfect state of union." 62 St. Teresa tells us the same thing.53

Only in such union is there realized, so far as it can be realized in this life, the full perfection toward which the great commandment bids us tend: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy mind and with all thy strength." Then will the just man accomplish not imperfectly but perfectly the great commandment and be truly a worshiper in spirit and in truth.84

52 *The Dark. Night,* Bk. П, chap. 2.

83 See the quotation given in the following footnote.

51 In regard to souls who have arrived at transforming union, St. Teresa writes: "Do not fancy that in spite of the strong desire and determination of these souls that they do not commit imperfections and even fall into many sins: that is, not wilfully; for such people arc given special grace from God on this point: I mean venial sins." *The Interior Castle,* seventh mansion, chap. 4, tr. Benedictines of Stanbrook (London: Baker, 1921).

CHAPTER XII

The Flower of Mortification: Consecrated Virginity

At the beginning of his study on virginity,[1] St. Thomas quotes the following words from St. Augustine's *De virginitate:* "Virginity is continence whereby integrity of the flesh is vowed, consecrated, and observed in honor of the Creator of both soul and body." [2] "It is the continual meditation [or firm purpose] to preserve incorruptible purity in corruptible flesh."[3]

St. Thomas explains[4] that the act of the virtue of virginity consists formally in the firm resolution to abstain until death from sensual or sexual pleasure. It follows that a virgin preserves her virginity when violated if she withholds her consent, whereas she loses the virtue by mere internal consent to sensual pleasure. In the latter case, it is true that as long as there has been no exterior and gravely culpable action, virginity can be recovered by contrition and penance.

Following the lead of the Angelic Doctor, we now discuss the following topics: (i) the meaning and import of the evangelical counsel inviting men to practice the virtue; (2) the nature of virginity and its relation to the other virtues;

[1] *Summa,* IIa Hae, q. 15X
[2] Chap. 8.
[3] *Ibid.,* chap. 13.
[4] IIa IIae, q.152.

(3) the manner of consecrating virgins; (4) virginity as a preparation for contemplation and divine union.

The evangelical counsel

Virginity is the object of an evangelical counsel, St. Paul tells us: "Now concerning virgins, I have no commandment of the Lord; but I give counsel, as having obtained mercy of the Lord, to be faithful. . . . If thou take a wife, thou hast not sinned. And if a virgin marry, she hath not sinned: nevertheless, such shall have tribulation of the flesh. . . . The time is short. It remaineth, that they also who have wives be as if they had none. . . . And they that use this world, as if they used it not. For the fashion of this world passeth away. But I would have you to be without solicitude. He that is without a wife is solicitous for the things that belong to the Lord, how he may please God. But he that is with a wife is solicitous for the things of the world, how he may please his wife. And he is divided. And the unmarried woman and the virgin thinketh on the things of the Lord, that she may be holy both in body and in spirit. But she that is married thinketh on the things of the world, how she may please her husband. . . . Therefore, both he that giveth his virgin in marriage, doth well; and he diat giveth her not, doth better." [5]

Every evangelical counsel invites us to do something better than the act contrary to it, *est de meliori bono.* Perpetual virginity preserved for love of God is more perfect than marriage. In fact, our Lord told us that some give up having a family that they may devote themselves more completely to the things of God's kingdom, "for the kingdom of heaven. He that can

[5] I Cor. 7: 25-38.

take, let him take it."[6] And the Apocalypse adds: "These follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth. These were purchased from among men, the first fruits to God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth there was found no lie; for they are without spot."[7]

Also, at the Council of Trent the Church condemned as heretical the Lutheran doctrine that the state of virginity is neither higher nor more perfect than the married state. Luther went so far as to say that the vow of virginity is illicit, because contrary to nature. This heresy St. Thomas refuted[8] before it was even proposed, when he showed that, because the body is made for the soul and the soul for God, a man may lawfully abstain from all carnal pleasure to be free to give himself more fully to the contemplation of divine Truth. That all means may be perfectly subordinated to our last end, the body must live for the soul and the soul for the contemplation, love, and praise of God. It seems questionable that a man could err to the point of holding that virginity preserved for love of God is unlawful. Far from being below the level of common morality, virginity rises above it by disposing the soul for the contemplative life, the life of God. It delivers men from servitude to the body and the passions, which generally overstep the mean unless they are kept this side of it. Our Lord, die Blessed Virgin, and many saints after them have excelled in the practice of this virtue.

Some, following Luther, unreasonably object that the common good of humanity, the perpetuation of the human race assured by marriage, is higher than the individual good sought by the preservation of virginity. Through St. Thomas wis-

[6] Matt. 19: 12.
[7] Apoc. 14: 4 f.
[8] IIa IIae, q. 152, a. 2.

dom answers[9] that God, the sovereign good, is above the common good of the human race; the divine good comes before any human good, the good of the soul comes before the good of the body, the good of the contemplative life before that of the active life. Now holy virginity is immediately ordered to the good of the soul, to the contemplative life and union with God, whereas marriage is ordered to the conservation of the human species and to the active life.

Contemplation of divine things being obviously more perfect than the end of marriage [10] (multiplication of the human species), the state of virginity is indisputably a higher state than married life. To deny this would be heretical, as the Council of Trenty stated [11] in the condemnation of Lutheranism and as Pope Pius IX reaffirmed in his attack on modern naturalism.[12]

By virginity, a human person lives, in a body of flesh, a wholly spiritual life, a kind of angelic life, a life so pure that it makes the body more and more like the soul, and the soul more and more like God. Virginity disposes the soul for participation in the light and love and strength of God. Purity of heart becomes apparent in look, attitude, and gesture. Sometimes the bodies of the saints have remained incorruptible in death, a glorious sign of their perfect chastity. The common measure provides no norm for virginity; like magnanimity, it has its own lofty measure and tends toward those great things perfectly in keeping with the sovereign good, God.

Against the great traditional doctrine concerning virginity,

• *Ibid.,* a. 4.
10 Ibid., ad 311m.
11 Sess. XXIV, can. 10.
12 Encyclical *Qui pluribus,* Dcnzinger, no. 1774.

Luther made a further objection: since none can know the certainty that they will have the grace to remain faithful to the vow of chastity, no one can prudently and licitly make the vow. Theology replies that we need not have absolute certainty of receiving this grace; it suffices that we hear our Lord's counsel, are attracted by it and, having taken the advice of a good guide, place our confidence in God's grace. Hope's certitude is not speculative like faith's but belongs to the practical order. The will plays a part in it, tending surely, under the direction of faith, toward its divine end. "Hence it is expedient to take vows." [13] The vow of virginity, far from being unlawful, is perfectly fitting for those who feel attracted by our Lord's counsel and put their trust in Him. In the same way conversion to Christianity and the making of the baptismal promises demand only that we know perseverance is possible with the help of grace.

Virginity and the other virtues

Having asked whether virginity is a special virtue distinct from simple chastity, St. Thomas answers unhesitatingly that it is,[14] because of its particular excellence, the renouncement for fife of all sensual or sexual pleasure. Two comparable parallels are magnanimity, which is a special virtue because it reaches out to greatness in the practice of all the other virtues it inspires; and munificence which, by its generosity, surpasses ordinary liberality. On the other hand, conjugal chastity and the chastity of widowhood are not special virtues distinct from ordinary chastity.

The renouncement of the material fecundity of marriage

[13] IIa IIae, q.i8, a.4; q.88, a.4.
[14] *Ibid.*, q. 152, a.3.

for God's sake receives its hundredfold even in this world; for virginity becomes the principle, or at least the condition, of spiritual fatherhood and motherhood, and the life it transmits lasts not merely for sixty or seventy years but forever. Our Lord founded no family of His own because He came to found the Church, an immense family lasting throughout time and eternity. Together with the apostles, every priest participates in the priesthood of Christ and receives from it his spiritual fatherhood for transmitting the life of grace to souls.

Even more fully than the apostles, the Blessed Virgin received this power and privilege. To her was given not the priestly character but the spirit of the priesthood in its fullness for she is at once the mother of God and the mother of men, the universal mediatrix of all graces in general and in particular. As she stood at the foot of the cross our Lord indicated John, the representative of redeemed humanity, and said to her: "Woman, behold thy son." Together with His mother, all the spouses of Christ who share Mary's virginity are called to share her spiritual motherhood of souls as well. And they, too, must be ready to pray and sacrifice themselves for their children.

From die fact that virginity has such greatness, it does not follow that virgins consecrated to God are always more perfect than faithful Christian mothers. Although a virgin is no doubt more perfect from one point of view, that is, because of her virginity, she can be simply less perfect, if she has less charity. Charity, the supreme virtue, unites us to God and neighbor and inspires and animates all the other virtues. The Christian virgin should be humble in her virginity and not believe that her virginity makes her absolutely more perfect

than some good mother who is continually sacrificing herself, in the spirit of Christ, for her children.

Virginity is not, then, the greatest of all virtues[15] but the most perfect form of the virtue of chastity. It stands below the theological virtues, which unite us immediately to God; below prudence, which directs all the moral virtues; below the virtue of religion, which renders to God the worship that is His due and offers to Him the acts of religious chastity; and even below fortitude, which sacrifices not only certain pleasures but, if need be, life itself for God by enduring martyrdom. Ends always have precedence over means; the virtues, as means, are the more perfect the nearer they approach the end toward which they are ordered.

Although not the greatest virtue, virginity gives to charity a visible body, as it were, and, by the renouncement of all other loves, opens men's eyes to the splendor of love for God.

The consecration of virgins

In his works St. Thomas often refers to the consecration of virgins,[16] particularly in the *Fourth Boo\ of the Sentences,*[17] where he asks whether, among people consecrating themselves to the service of God by the vow of perpetual continence, a special veil should be given to virgins. His answer is as follows: "It is unfitting that the Church should have in her liturgy anything erroneous. But throughout the entire ceremony for the veiling of virgins mention is made of integrity of the flesh, as can easily be verified. Therefore the veil of virgins can be given only to virgins."

15 *Ibid.,* a. 5.

18 Cf. *Tabula aurea operum S. Thomae* under the words *consecratio,* 13, 14» *5» 16, 17, and *virginitas,* 25, 26.

17 Dist. 38, q. I, a.5.

St. Thomas explains the reason for this as follows:

Every sensible thing the Church uses has a spiritual significance. And since a single corporeal thing fails to represent adequately something spiritual, one spiritual reality may sometimes be represented by several corporeal signs. The spiritual marriage of Christ and the Church is fruitful, for by it the sons of God are given birth; it is pure, for, as the Epistle to the Ephesians reads, "Christ also loved the Church, and delivered Himself up for it, . . . that He might present it to Himself, a glorious Church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing." . . . For which reason, St. Paul writes (II Cor. 11:2): "For I have espoused you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

Now bodily fruitfulness and virginity or integrity of the flesh are incompatible. Therefore two different signs are needed to represent the spiritual marriage of Christ and His Church, one to image its fruitfulness, the other to reflect its perfect purity or integrity.

Since on earth marriage represents the fruitfulness of the spiritual relationship between Christ and His Church, another symbol is needed to typify its integrity. The veiling of virgins accomplishes this in all its words and ceremonies. Because of that fact, only bishops, into whose keeping the Church has been committed, can give virgins the veil, acting as the friend and proxy of the bridegroom. Further, the pure integrity of Christ's union with the Church is symbolized perfectly by virginal continence but only imperfectly by the continence of widows. Therefore, although they too receive the veil, it is not given to them with the same solemnity.

The holy doctor himself raises the objection: "But the veiling of virgins confers no grace; if it did, it would be a sacrament and should be given to non-virgins as well that they may have the help of grace to observe continence." To this he gives answer:

In the consecration of virgins, as in the anointing of kings and other blessings of the same kind, grace is given if there is no obstacle on the part of the recipient. However, these consecrations and blessings are not called sacraments for they were not instituted, like the sacraments, to cure the sickness of sin.[18]

For any eminent state of life some special help of grace is needed and is given by some sanctifying action; for example, in the consecration of kings and of monks and of nuns. These consecrations are acts belonging to the hierarchy [19] . . . they have not, however, the nature of sacraments . . . monks and abbots are blessed . . . these blessings, unlike that of holy orders, give no power to those who receive them to dispense divine things.[20] . . .

Marriage is solemnized in . . . the array of the bridegroom and the bride and the gathering of their kindred. Now a vow is a promise made to God; wherefore the solemnization of a vow consists in something spiritual or something special pertaining to God; i.e., in some spiritual blessing or consecration which, in accordance with the institution of the apostles, is given when a man makes profession of observing a certain rule, in the second degree after the reception of holy orders as Dionysius states *(Eccl. Hier.* vi.). The reason of this is that solemnization is not wont to be employed, save when a man gives himself entirely to some particular thing; . . . a vow is solemnized when a man devotes himself to the divine ministry by receiving holy orders, or embraces the state of perfection by renouncing the world and his own will by the profession of a certain rule.[21]

To St. Thomas' mind, this consecration of persons is lasting, just as the consecration of a chalice endures as long as the chalice is a chalice.[22]

[18] *IV Sent.,* disc 38, q. i, a. 5, ad 2um.
[18] *Ibid.,* d.2, q. I, a.2, ad 9um.
[20] *Ibid.,* d.24, q.1, a.i; q.3, a.3.
[21] IIa IIae, q.88, a. 7.
[**] *Ibid-,* a. 11.

Because of the excellence of virginity, the consecration of virgins is reserved to bishops. Whereas priests may bless marriages and give the veil to widows, only the bishop, into whose care the Church has been confided, may espouse virgins to Christ, for they are a figure of the Church, the spouse of the Savior.[23]

St. Thomas himself brings up two more objections against this ancient custom of the Church, asking first whether it is not unjust to deny this solemn consecration to those who through violence have lost their virginity yet desire to give themselves to God. He answers this by saying that those who have been violated against their will keep the glory of their virginity in the eyes of God but, because it is so difficult not to take some illicit pleasure in the experience and the Church cannot pass judgment on individual consciences in this matter, the veil of virgins should not be bestowed on those who have suffered external violence to their virginity. Pope St. Leo considered it better that those who had lost their bodily integrity during the barbarian oppression should, out of humility and modesty, not seek to join a community of virgins.[24]

The second objection St. Thomas introduces is that scandal would sometimes result when, through refusing someone the veil and consecration of virgins, it became known that she had lost her virginity. To this St. Thomas makes answer that the avoidance of scandal is not a sufficient reason for modifying the sacraments or sacramentals of the Church but that, according to certain theologians, in a particular case, to avoid scandal, those parts of the ceremony which belong to the substance of the consecration and blessing of virgins may be

[23] *IV Sent., d.24,* q.2, a.3, c.
[24] *Ibid.,* d.38, q. I, a.5, ad 4um.

omitted and the word virginity replaced by the word chastity.[25] As a matter of fact, the ceremonials of some religious orders, notably the Order of St. Dominic, contain certain modifications for the ceremony of veiling widows.[26]

In all this St. Thomas' teaching conforms to tradition and follows very closely St. Ambrose's writings, especially the wording he used in consecrating virgins. These came at times even from Bologna and other neighboring cities to receive this consecration from him before the altar at Milan. The same custom existed in the Churches of Africa and, as many documents show, goes back as far as the first century, and it was common teaching that only a bishop could perform this consecration.[27] Many religious belonging to orders antedating the thirteenth century and even a few of recent foundation still receive this ancient consecration. In other orders, the solemn vow of virginity is considered its equivalent.

Virginity, contemplation, and divine union

If virginity is to be a spiritual flower of unfading perfection and delicacy, it must be carefully guarded. It needs exterior mortification of the body and the senses, particularly sight and touch, and interior mortification both of the imagination and its bent for day dreaming and of the heart and its weakness for forging chains to bind its own liberty to seek and find God. It must have the freedom of a strong flame to reach up to its infinitely good and beautiful Lord and love.

God gives the virtue of virginity. To keep it we must

26 *Ibid.*, ad 511m.

26 *Processionarium juxta ritum S. Ordinis Praedicatorum,* 1913, pp. 152–62, "Officium ad ponendum velum monialibus."

27 Cf. Migne's *Patrologia Latina,* III, General Index, CCXX, p. 710, *Index de virginibus,* chap. *De consecratione virginum.* See also XVI, 204, 275, 372; LII, 1098, 1099, 1100; LXXVIII, 173; CLXX, 558.

turn to the two great mediators deeded to us for the support of our weakness. We must consecrate ourselves to Mary, the Virgin of virgins, so that she may bring us close to Christ, who leads us to the Father, making real the words of the beatitude, "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God." Blessed are those who keep their hearts lifted up to the Most High. They will see Him face to face in heaven and even, though in another way, in this life—within themselves and within their brethren, in that inner sanctuary He deigns to make His home.

St. Thomas, in his *Commentary on St. Matthew,* remarks that a pure heart free from thoughts and affections apart from God is like a temple consecrated to the Lord where He may be contemplated even in this world. Nothing proves so great a hindrance to divine contemplation as impurity. The pure must possess peace, too, for as the Epistle to the Hebrews tells us, "Follow peace with all men, and holiness: without which no man shall see God." [28] Even during their lifetime, the saints, with hearts full of grace and divine justice, contemplate God in a way far beyond the reach of those who know Him only through material creation. The higher the effects of the First Cause, the better they make Him known to us. Pure hearts, as they come to know God better, make Him known more perfectly, being more like Him, tasting and knowing His sweetness.

By perfect chastity, the soul becomes purified of all inordinate affections and, freed from every illusion, mounts, by the gift of understanding, from the sensible to the spiritual and, without in this life being able to behold God as He is, yet sees more and more clearly what He is not and how He infinitely surpasses not only all material things, but all actual and po-

28 Hcb. 12: 14.

tential spirits. And the soul gains deeper and deeper insight into the truth that the intimate life of God surpasses every idea that we can form of Him. Even on earth the pure of heart begin to taste experimentally that God is, in a sense, greater than truth or goodness or wisdom or love or justice or mercy or omnipotence, for His intimate life contains formally and eminently these infinite perfections, grounded and identified in an ineffable harmony, revealed only in the beatific vision, and never fully comprehensible except to His own uncreated intelligence.[29]

Happy are those who hear the evangelical counsel of virginity and follow it perfectly. To them, as to St. Bernard, St. Thomas Aquinas, and St. John of the Cross, it is given to grasp the meaning of the book closed to so many, the Canticle of Canticles. Under the illumination of the Holy Ghost, who loves to stoop down to pure hearts, they discover in its pages spiritual beauties hidden from the most penetrating human critics.

In *The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena* certain passages form one of the loveliest spiritual canticles ever written and express the complete and deepening consecration of perfect virginity.

> Wherefore these pierced feet are steps by which thou canst arrive at his side, which manifests to thee the secret of his heart, because the soul, rising on the steps of her affection, commences to taste the love of his heart.[30]
>
> But there are many who begin their course climbing so slowly, and render their debt to me by such small degrees, and with such negligence and ignorance, that . . . because they imperfectly

[29] IIa IIae, q.8, a.7.
[30] Chap. 26.

climb to the first step of the Bridge of Christ crucified, they do not arrive at the second step of his heart.[31]

These weak ones of whom I speak relax their energy, impatiently turning backwards, and sometimes abandon, under colour of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, "This labour does not profit me." All this they do because they feel themselves deprived of mental consolation.[32]

The soul who has climbed this step with servile fear and mercenary love alone, falls into many troubles. Such souls should arise and become sons, and serve me, irrespective of themselves. . . . While they remain in the state of mercenary love I do not manifest myself to them. If they, through displeasure at their imperfection, and love of virtue, dig up, with hatred, the root of spiritual self-love . . . they will be so pleasing to me that they will attain to the love of the friend. And I will manifest myself to them, as my Truth said in these words: "He who loves me shall be one thing with me and I with him, and I will manifest myself to him and we will dwell together." This is the state of two dear friends, for though they are two in body, yet they are one in soul through the affection of love, because love transforms the lover into the object loved, and where two friends have one soul, there can be no secret between them, wherefore my Truth said: "I will come and we will dwell together," and this is the truth.[33]

Where did the soul know of this her dignity, in being kneaded and united with the blood of the Lamb, receiving the grace in holy baptism, in virtue of the blood? In the side, where she knew the fire of divine charity. . . . Because . . . I had finished the actual work of bearing pain and torment, and yet I had not been able to show, by finite things, because my love was infinite, how much more love I had, I wished thee to see the secret of the heart, show-

[31] Chap. 59.
[32] Chap. 60.
[33] *Ibid.*

ing it to thee open, so that thou mightest see how much more I loved than I could show thee by finite pain.[34]

Such as arrive at the mouth show it by taking the office of the mouth. The mouth speaks . . . and tastes. . . . The soul does likewise. First she speaks to me with the tongue of holy and continual prayer . . . offering to me sweet and amorous desires for the salvation of souls, and actually announcing the doctrine of my Truth, admonishing, counselling, confessing . . . taking the food of souls, for my honour, on the table of the cross . . . swallowing, for the sake of the salvation of souls, insults, villainies, reproofs and persecutions. . . . She then tastes the relish of the fruit of toil and the delight of the food of souls, on fire with my love and that of her neighbour. . . .

The death of the sensitive will, after the soul has eaten of the affection of my charity, is the sign by which it is known, in truth, that the soul has arrived at the third step, that is the mouth. And in the mouth she finds peace and quiet, and nothing can disturb her peace and quiet, because her sensual will is dead. They who have arrived at this step, bring forth the virtues upon their neighbor without pain, not because pain is no longer painful to them, but because, their sensitive will being dead, they voluntarily bear pain for my sake. They run without negligence, by the doctrine of Christ crucified, and slacken not their pace on account of persecutions, injuries or pleasures of the world. They pass by all these things with fortitude and perseverance, their affection clothed in the affection of charity, and eating the food of souls with true and perfect patience, which patience is a sign that the soul is in perfect love, loving without any consideration of self. For did she love me and her neighbour for her own profit, she would, in impatience, slacken her steps, but loving me, who am the Supreme Being and worthy to be loved, she loves herself and her neighbour through

84 Chap. 75.

me alone, caring only for the glory and praise of my name, which causes her to be patient and strong to suffer, and persevering.[35]

Such as these follow the Immaculate Lamb, my only-begotten Son, who was both blessed and sorrowful on the cross. He was sorrowful in that he bore the cross of the body, suffering pain and the cross of desire, in order to satisfy for the guilt of the human race, and he was blessed because the divine nature, though united with the human, could suffer no pain, but always kept his soul in a state of blessedness, being revealed without a veil to her, so that he was both blessed and sorrowful, for, while the flesh endured, neither the Deity nor the superior part of the soul, which is above the intellect, could suffer.[36]

So these, my sons of delight, who have arrived at the third and fourth states, are sorrowful, for they carry both a physical and a mental cross—that is to say, they bear pain in their bodies according to my permission, and in their mind the cross of desire, for they are tortured by sorrow at the offence done to me, and the loss of their neighbour. Yet I say to thee that they are blessed, because the delight of charity which makes them so, cannot be taken away from them. . . ,[37]

Souls, arising with anxious desire, run, with virtue, by the Bridge of the doctrine of Christ crucified, and arrive at the gate, lifting up their minds in me, and in the blood, and burning with the fire of love they taste in me, the eternal Deity, who am to them a sea pacific, with whom the soul has made so great a union, that she has no movement except in me.[38]

These passages echo the song of St. Agnes: "It is Christ whom I love, I am become the bride of him whose mother is a virgin, and whose father knoweth not a woman, the instru-

85 Chap. 76.

88 The doctrine dictated by St. Catherine of Siena duplicates St. Thomas', as discussed earlier, chap. 4, art. 2.

87 Chap. 78.

88 Chap. 79.

ments of his music sound sweetly in mine ears: When I love him I am chaste; when I touch him I am pure; when I possess him I am a virgin."

St. Paul was speaking to all the faithful when he wrote: "For I am jealous of you with the jealousy of God. For I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (II Cor. 11:2). The faithful form one body, the Church, the spouse of Christ, which must persevere in faith and hope and love. Our insight into this supernatural mystery grows as we see that the spiritual union of Christ and the Church is fruitful and perfectly pure and that it needs to be symbolized in its fecundity by the sacrament of matrimony and in its absolute purity by the consecration of virgins, who, like the Church, bear the name of spouses of Jesus Christ.

When in heaven we shall see all the souls saved by the prayers and sacrifices of those whom Christ has chosen for close association in His inner life and the great redemptive mission and mystery, then only shall we understand the value and rich fruitfulness of this spiritual union.

PART III

The Laws of Progress in Love of God

CHAPTER XIII

St. Thomas' Doctrine on the Increase of Charity and Meritorious Acts

If there is one subject that is especially important for the spiritual life, it is unquestionably the increase of charity. Being the greatest of all virtues, charity ought to inspire and animate all the others by making them direct their every act to God, loved more than ever and above all things. No one can be saved without this supernatural virtue, meant to grow in us daily all our life long.

To insure giving an orderly treatment of the subject, we shall follow the plan outlined in St. Thomas *(Summa theologica)?* considering first how and why charity can increase in us; secondly, whether every act of charity, no matter how imperfect, increases the virtue; thirdly, whether charity can go on increasing indefinitely; and fourthly, what perfection charity can achieve in this life. In the following chapters we shall show how fervor falls away because of venial sin and grows strong through daily Communion.

ARTICLE I

THE GROWTH OF CHARITY

Charity of any degree, however small, always loves God, the author of salvation, above all things, even self, and neigh-

1 Summa, Ha Ilae, q. 24, a. 4-10.

bor as self for love of God. Charity excludes no one. Any exclusion would mean a sin so grave as to destroy charity.

r Granting that chanty extends to all, we next inquire in what way it may be said to grow. We can have no doubt that it can and must grow in our souls, for St. Paul tells the Ephesians: "But doing the truth in charity, we may in all things grow up in Him who is the head, even Christ." [2] And to the Philippians he writes: "And this I pray, that your charity may more and more abound." [3] And to the Thessalonians: "And may the Lord multiply you and make you abound in charity towards one another and towards all men: as we do also towards you, to confirm your hearts without blame, in holiness, before God and our Father." [4] The words of the angel in the Apocalypse add: "He that is just, let him be justified still: and he that is holy, let him be sanctified still." [5] Even in the Old Testament in the Book of Proverbs the same idea finds expression: "But the path of the just, as a shining light, goeth forwards and increaseth even to perfect day." [6] The Council of Trent[7] solemnly defined the truth found expressed in the Church's prayer, *Da nobis fidei, spei et caritatis augmentum*. "Increase our faith, our hope, our charity."

Theological reasoning [8] explains this infallible teaching by reminding us that the Christian is called a traveler, *a viator*, since he is making his way toward God and heaven. It is not by steps of the body, by local motion, that we draw near

[2] Eph. 4: 15.
[3] Phil, i: 9.
[4] I Thess. 3:12.
[5] Apoc. 22: ii.
[6] Prov. 4: 18.
[7] Sess. VI, cap. io.
[8] Cf. *Summa,* Da Ilae, q. 24, a. 4.

te^God but by acts of increasingly perfect love, *gressibus amoris,* steps of love, as St. Gregory pUtsit^SZe must conclude, then that in this life charity can always be increased; if not, the Christian would no longer be a traveler, he would have stopped on his journey before reaching Kom^Jn this life he must push on along the road. It offers him nowhere to stop, to rest, no place to call his home,

The contrasting words found in St. Luke, "Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger," [8] and those recorded by St. Matthew, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after justice: for they shall have their fill," [10] remind us again that our home is not here. Home is where the heart is, and the heart is with its treasure, "If any man thirst, let him come to Me, and drink. . . . Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water." [11]

Not only beginners and proficients but even those who have already reached a higher degree of perfection should continue growing in charity. Further, the perfect outpace the less generous because the nearer they come to God the more He attracts them,[12] just as falling bodies move faster and faster as they near the earth owing to the increasing attraction it exercises over them. The progressive acceleration of the soul approaching God finds a most striking example in the Blessed Virgin Mary for she was unhampered by the slightest venial sin and continually drew nearer to God. In a lesser degree the spiritual progress of the saints obeys the same law; even when weighed down by old age they understand and live the words

9 Luke 6: 25.
10 Matt. 5: 6.
11 John 7: 37 f.
12 St. Thomas, *In Ep. ad Hacbr.* x, 25; Ia Hae, q.35, a.6; *I De coelo,* lect. 17.

of the Psalmist: "Thy youth shall be renewed like the eagle's," [18].

Since even the lowest degree of charity requires that we love God above all things and our neighbor as ourselves, without any exception, charity evidently cannot acquire any greater extension. It can grow in intensity, becoming more and more deeply rooted in the will and more and more determined by increasingly generous actions to fly sin and to seek God.

If charity grew by addition, like a pile of golden coins, it would multiply but not really increase,[14] since it would not become more intense, multiplication belonging to the order of quantity not of quality, an entirely different thing.[15] Charity really increases in us through becoming more and more deeply rooted in the will by informing it and determining it more completely to supernatural goods and leading it farther and farther from evil. The scholar offers us a parallel here. Even if he sometimes fails to keep up to the minute on every new discovery in his particular science, his knowledge deepens, sharpens, and becomes more certain because, although he has long known the principles and conclusions of his science, his understanding of their relationship keeps growing and he grasps more fully, intimately, and simply the formal object of his study. So charity grows and deepens in us by cleaving more and more closely to God for His own sake and to our neighbor for the sake of God. Incidentally Thomistic teaching on this point explains the necessity for the passive purification of the spirit to rid the great virtues of every imperfection and bring

18 Ps. 102: 5.

14 Cf. IIa IIae, q.24, a.5.

15 A second degree of charity added to the first would either be equal to it or greater than it. If it were equal, charity would simply be multiplied, not increased or intensified; if it were greater, then the first degree would become useless.

into strong relief their formal object, divine truth and goodness.16

The next question to be considered is whether acts of charity themselves have the power to effect an increase of charity. Q£. charity were a virtue acquired by repeated acts, it would certainly increase in the same way. But charity is an infused virtue, God-given at baptism. Since charity is a participation in God's own life,the uncreatedlove uniting the three divine-persons, only God can produce it in u^Sincé only God can give itfonly He caninc reaseTffry-makingTrs-furtheTgifts.17 The same~must be saicToFall the infused virtùêFàndrhe gifts of the Holy Ghost. "And he that ministereth seed to the sower, will both give you bread to eat, and will multiply your seed, and increase the growth of the fruits of your justice: that being enriched in all things, you may abound unto all simplicity, which worketh through us thanksgiving to God." 18 God indeed and God alone gives the increase, sanctifying and making saints.

Nevertheless, although our acts of charity cannot of themselves effect an increase of the virtue of charity, they do concur in its growth in two ways. hirst, they concur from a moral point of view by meriting a right to a reward. The just really merit an increase of charity by their supernatural good works,19 as the Council of Trent defined.20 While waiting for their heavenly reward, they receive from God a recompense in this life, the growth of divine love within them so that

18 The view St. John of the Cross takes, that the spiritual life matures from one age level to the next by progress in humility and the theological virtues, recommends itself as a better way to express this truth.

17 Ila Ilae, q.24, a.5, ad 3um.

18 II Cor. 9: 10 f.

18 Cf. la Ilae, q. 114, a. 8.

20 Sess. VI, can. 24, 32.

they love God with greater strength and purity.[21] The quietists forgot that the more disinterested a soul becomes, the more it desires its reward—to love God more and more.

In the second place, our acts of charity physically dispose the will to receive an increase of the divine life or infused charity, just as, at the moment of conversion or justification, our acts of faith, hope, and contrition dispose us to receive sanctifying grace and charity.[22] Acts of charity in some way enlarge our higher faculties so that they are capable of holding more; or bptter^ they lift our powers up to new heights and make them ready to climb still higher.[23] The infused virtues and the gifts of the Holy Ghost received with sanctifying grace grow along with g£a£f^since they form, as it were, one supernatural organism?^-

ARTICLE II

THE ACTS AND GROWTH OF CHARITY

Having seen that charity can increase in us and that it grows through the inpouring action of God and yet according to the measure of our merits and dispositions, we next ask whether charity grows with its every act, however imperfect. We know that a man of ten taleqts who acts as if he had but five talents acts imperfectly, because his action has less intensityjhan the virtue from which it proceeds.[25] The question, therefore, arises

21 la Ilac, q. 114, a. 8.

22 *Ibid.,* q. 112, a. 2.

23 Ila Ilae, q.24, a. 7, c. et ad 2um.

24 la Ilae, q.68, a.5; q.66, a.2.

26 The term "imperfect act" is used in this sense throughout the present discussion. *"Remissus"* may also be translated as sluggish, slack, feeble, without intensity, not very generous.

whether an imperfect action of this kind can increase the virtue of charity by an added talent or degree.

Theologians before and after St. Thomas have argued this difficult question. As usual, some adopt either one of two extreme opposing theses, between which we find a third, keeping to the just mean and rising above the other two toward the heights of truth, St. Thomas' own thought, as we believe.

Some theologians, even some great theologians,[26] say that imperfect acts of charity~do not merit condignly or in justice arunçrease of the virtue of charity. Others, like Suarez,[27] take the opposite view, holding that every act of charity, even when imperfect, merits in justice an increase of the virtue and obtains it immediately.

St. Thomas seems to find the proper mean and the point of culmination when he says: "Every act of charity merits everlasting life, which, however, is not to be bestowed then and there, but at its proper time. In like manner every act of charity merits an increase of charity; yet this increase does not take place at once, but when we strive for that increase." [28] He adds: "Even vyhtfn an acquired virtue is being engendered, each act does not complete the formation of the virtue, but conduces toward that effect by disposing to it, while the last act, which is the most perfect and which acts in virtue of all those acts that preceded it, reduces the virtue into act, just as when many drops hollow out a stone." [28]

St. Thomas demonstrates the truth of this doctrine as fol-

[28] Outstandingly Durandus. Cf. Salmanticcnses, *Curtus theol., de caritate, de caritatis augmento,* tr. 19, disp. V, vi.

[27] Suarez, *De gratia,* Bk. VIII, chap. 3.

[28] Ila Ilac, q.24, a.6, ad turn.

[28] *Ibid.,* ad 2um.

lows. Every act of charity, even when imperfect, merits in justice an increase of charity because it fulfills all the conditions for condign merit. It is a supernatural act done by a just man, God's friend, for God's sake, and our Lord has promised a reward for every least act of charity, even a cup of water given in His name. Besides, the Council of Trent[30] has defined that by his own good works done through God's grace a just man truly merits an increase of grace. Now any act of charity, even if markedly inferior to the degree of charity from which it proceeds, is a good work, a supernatural act of love for God, of divine friendship. It has not all the perfection required for generous progress; it contains imperfection, something formally not good, but the act itself is not bad, not a venial sin, however slight; and, although less good than a more intense act of charity, it is still intrinsically good and meritorious.

St. Paul says: "He who soweth sparingly shall also reap sparingly."[31] He reaps something however. And if the hairs of our head are all numbered and on judgment day we must answer for every idle word of ours, the Lord also takes account of every smallest act of charity; they are all written in die book of life[32] and will receive their reward.

Besides, if we refuse to admit this conclusion, we get into serious difficulties. It would follow that imperfect acts performed by a great saint would not merit an increase of charity, whereas the generous, although inferior, acts of a beginner would merit it. Anyone with ten talents who acted as if he had but nine would not merit, while another of one talent who used it to the full would merit. It seems, therefore, certain that

80 Sess. VI, can. 32.
81 II Cor. 9: 6.
82 Cf. St. Ambrose, *De Spiritu Sancto,* Bk. II.

every act of charity, even if imperfect, merits an increase of the virtue.

However, we hold with St. Thomas that imperfect acts of charity do not immediately obtain the increase which they merit,[33] because[34] God confers more sanctifying grace and charity only when a man is ready, by his dispositions, to receive them, just as, at the moment of conversion or justification, sanctifying grace is given according to the convert's dispositions, the fervor of his contrition.[36]

Speaking in the language of talents, certainly one who has ten talents but acts as if he had only two, is not yet disposed to receive another, for his action falls short of the virtue from which it proceeds. In this we can see a certain analogy between the natural and the supernatural; for a man with intelligence above the average who barely applies himself to his work, makes little progress in scientific studies while another, despite the fact that he is not so gifted, gains an excellent grasp of his subject because of his industry. In the natural order, too, friendship grows stronger only through increasing generosity; niggardly ways may keep it going but can never add to it. It seems, then, that we must conclude with St. Thomas that, although imperfect acts of charity are meritorious, they do not immediately obtain their merited increase of grace.[38]

83 Ia Ilae, q.ri4, a.8, ad 311m; Ha Ilae, q.24, a.6, ad Ium.

84 Suarez fails to appreciate this truth, maintaining that imperfect acts of charity *(actus remissi)* obtain immediately the increase of charity which they merit.

85 Ia Dae, q.itz, a.2; Ila Ilae, q.24, a.3.

88 The objection has been made that whoever receives Communion with the requisite dispositions, even if they are quite imperfect, immediately obtains some slight increase of grace and charity and that, therefore, whoever performs a very imperfect act of charity also obtains immediately the feeble increase of charity merited. Evidently no such parity exists between the increase of grace produced by the sacraments *ex opere operato* and that which is merited outside the sacraments *ex opere operantis.* Cf. St. John of St. Thomas, the Carmelites of Salamanca, Gonet, and Billuart, *De caritate, de caritatis augmento.*

The question at once arises as to precisely when good men do receive the increase of charity merited by their imperfect acts. Some Thomists reply[37] that as soon as a man makes a fervent act of charity he thereby becomes disposed to receive the increase of grace due his imperfect past actions and so receives it. However, according to the same authorities, the increase of grace given him would be just as great without them. Other Thomists usually answer[38] that this amounts to saying that the meritorious but imperfect actions already done are really deprived of the increase of grace they merit; they have then no condign merit and by them die just cannot really be said to grow in charity, contrary to the Council of Trent's declaration[39] that the just man grows in grace and charity by good works.

Suppose a man with ten talents of charity lives for years as if he had only eight but, when dying, makes an act of charity of ten talents. Another man who is dying after having spent his whole life in mortal sin makes an identical act. Certainly the first man deserves a greater essential reward than the second. His good but imperfect acts seem to merit a special increase of grace, distinct from what is due to the fervent act following them. And what is true for him is true for all.

The question still remains, then, as to when the just will receive the special increase of charity due their imperfect but meritorious acts, so frequent in our lives. It would be difficult to admit that this happens during a man's lifetime on the performance of a more fervent act, for then the in-

87 Bannez and Contenson.

88 John of St. Thomas, the Carmelites of Salamanca, Gonet, Billuart, and others.

89 Sess. VI, cap. 10.

crease received would correspond only to the disposition realized by this last act.[40]

Some excellent Thomists[41] consider that the just who pass through purgatory receive there the merited increase of grace on making an intense act of charity. Such acts are no longer meritorious, since the hour for merit is past, but they dispose the soul to receive the increase of charity already merited but not yet obtained for lack of proper dispositions. This would explain how the souls in purgatory grow, in a sense, in charity, their love of God intensifying as they become purified; for, although they can no longer merit, purgatory, like the passive purifications undergone in this life, makes them more capable of loving God.

According to the same theologians, when a just man dies and goes directly to heaven, the increase of charity due to his imperfect meritorious acts is accorded to him at the moment he enters into glory and is given the immediate vision of God. On entering heaven, the separated soul, although no longer able to merit, loves God to the full of its capacity and in the measure of all its past merits.[42]

This opinion conforms to the general principle that the last disposition of a form or perfection is realized at the instant when the perfection itself comes into being. For example, the last disposition for sanctifying grace is an act of charity produced under God's inflowing action at the very moment of justification.[43] And in the first moment of heaven the soul makes an act of love so intense that it disposes the soul to receive the increase of charity due to all its imperfect but

40 Salmanticenses, *De carilate,* disp. V, dub. Ill, 2.

41 Those referred to in footnote 38.

42 Summa, suppl., q.93, a.3.

48 Ia Ilae, q. 113, a. 7, 8.

meritorious acts.[44] Thus participation in the beatific vision would correspond in intensity to the soul's charity and all its merits on earth.[45]

Theology can say nothing further about things so high and mysterious; it has done much to arrive at statements that have the exactness and serious probability of these.

St. Thomas' doctrine that imperfect acts of charity do not immediately obtain their merited increase of charity invites us to a greater generosity than Suarez' contrary view. To Suarez, the Christian of ten talents who is content to act for a long time as if he had but two seems less abnormal than he does to St. Thomas. According to the Angelic Doctor, perseverance in fervor demands intense acts of charity, and normally acts even more intense than those preceding them, *actus non remissos, sed intensiores.* There should be a real ascent, a growing progress, an ever-increasing development of all die infused virtues and the gifts connected with charity. We should not be surprised that normal progress is like this, that really interior and generous souls usually receive the grace of infused contemplation and the divine union resulting from it. In fact, the Holy Ghost generally moves souls so far as, through the infused virtues and the gifts, they are habitually docile to Him. We cannot see why He would, without reason, move souls to imperfect acts, for they would then have received a high degree of infused virtues and gifts in vain. A just man who places no obstacle in the way of divine action will normally receive greater and greater vir-

44 This intense act of charity at the first instant of glory presupposes the beatific vision in the order of efficient causality and disposes the soul for it in the order of material causality. There is reciprocal action between causes of different orders. The bird carries its wings, and the wings carry the bird. St. Thomas gives us the principles governing the interaction of causes. Cf. Ia IIae, q. 113, a. 8.

45 Ia, q. 12, a. 6.

tues so that he may go forward courageously to God, in the light of that divine wisdom which is contemplation.

Obviously then, as the Carmelites of Salamanca observe,[48] God is more glorified by a single act of charity of ten talents than by ten acts of charity of one talent each, or again one perfect man alone is more pleasing to God than many mediocre and lukewarm followers. Quality matters more than quantity. At the first moment of her life Mary's fullness of grace surpassed all the graces of all the saints. She is the diamond of greater worth than all the rest of God's jewels put together. And the conversion of one sinner like Magdalen or Saul to great sanctity gives more glory to God than the preservation of many sinners arrested at the first stages of the spiritual life.

In developing these inferences at length in their treatise on charity, the Carmelites of Salamanca have given us new insight into the normal progress of the infused virtues and the gifts and they have added a further confirmation to the teaching to be found in *Christian Perfection and Contemplation* [47] on the relationship between infused contemplation and perfect charity in the normal life of sanctity.

The growth of charity during life

To the question whether we should look on charity as a line stretching into infinity or, on the contrary, as something akin to the human body in having bounds beyond which its development cannot go, St. Thomas answers[48] that we can put no stopping place to the progress of charity in this life.

46 De caritate, disp. V, dub. III, vii, nos. 76, 80, 85, 93, 117.

47 Christian Perfection anti Contemplation, chap. 3, arts. 3, 4; chap. 4, arts. 4, 5; chap. 5, art. *2.*

48 IIa IIae, q.24, a.7.

Indeed, St. Paul's words to the Philippians reveal this truth to us: "Not as though I had already attained, or were already perfect; but I follow after, if I may by any means apprehend, wherein I am also apprehended by Christ Jesus."[49] And in the *Apocalypse* more advanced souls are told: "He that is just, let him be justified still."[80] In this life no one dares say: "Now I love God enough." To set limits to love would mean leaving the way that leads to God or, at least, stopping on the way before the journey's end.

Theological reasoning explains this truth by considering the possible ways in which charity might be limited and by rejecting them all.[81] In itself charity finds no limiting principle, for it is a participation in uncreated and infinite charity, just as sanctifying grace is a participation in the divine nature. In God who gives it, charity finds nodiing to set bounds to it, for God has infinite power and can always increase our charity. Even the finiteness of our souls which receive charity places no limitations on its growth, since charity develops our capacity for more charity;[82] by love the spiritual heart is enlarged, as it were, that it may hold more love. "I have run the way of Thy commandments, when Thou didst enlarge my heart."[83] "Our mouth is open to you, O ye Corinthians; our heart is enlarged," says St. Paul. "You are not straitened in us; but in your own bowels you are straitened.

« Pha. 3:12.

50 Apoc. 22: it.

61 Ila llae, q. 24, a. 7.

52 *Ibid.:* "Whenever charity increases, there is a corresponding increased ability to receive a further increase." *Ibid.,* ad 2um: "The capacity of the rational creature is increased by charity, because the heart is enlarged thereby, according to II Cor. 6: 2: 'Our heart is enlarged': so that it still remains capable of receiving a further increase."

"Ps. 118:32.

But having the same recompense (I speak as to my children), be you also enlarged." [84]

Even if we were to grow continually in charity, none of us could ever overtake Mary, the mother of God, for by God's predestination the initial fullness of graces she received at the moment of her immaculate conception surpassed even then the graces of all the saints, and it never stopped growing during her whole life. There is all the more reason why our charity could never equal Christ's because, from the first moment of His conception, He had an absolute fullness of charity proportionate to the uncreated grace uniting His sacred soul to the person of the Word.[88]

A just man cannot attain in this life to the degree of charity he will have at home with God in heaven, for on entering into glory all will receive a last increase of the virtue. But, in line with what has just been said, it certainly seems, as many Thomists teach, that a great saint, even while living, may have a degree of charity equal or superior to that possessed in heaven by the soul of an infant who died immediately after baptism. We can hardly doubt this in the case of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or even of St. Paul and St. John.

Nevertheless in heaven charity is more perfect than it is on earth from two points of view: first, it can never be lost, for the beatific vision of God's infinite goodness makes sin impossible; secondly, it is continually and completely occupied with God, suffering no interruptions from sleep and the other necessities of life on earth.

All these considerations lead us to ask whether men can

64II Cor. 6: 11.
6S St. Thomas, Illa, q.7, a.i; a.9-13.

have perfect charity in this life. St. Thomas answers[86] by making two distinctions. We cannot now or ever love God as much as He deserves to be loved. Our return of love to His infinite lovableness must be finite. God alone, by His uncreated charity, can give Himself a love commensurate with His own lovableness. Further, in this life our charity cannot always be concerned with God; that is possible only in heaven.

However, our charity can be perfect in this world by avoiding not only everything contrary to it (mortal sin) but whatever would, of its nature, slow its ascent to God. Those who have the true spirit of the evangelical counsels and practice more and more perfectly the first commandment of divine love do love God perfectly in this life.

On the way of perfection, beginners are concerned principally with their battle against sin, proficients practice the virtues and grow in love of God and of neighbor, and the perfect seek above all to act only out of love of God, to cleave to Him, to enjoy Him and, like St. Paul, they desire to do so that they may die with Christ.[87]

[86] IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 8.
[87] *Ibid.*, a. 9.

CHAPTER XIV

Charity and Venial Sin

Having discussed why and how charity can increase, having explained that acts of charity, although unable directly to produce an increase of the virtue, do merit it and even physically dispose our will to receive it, we then took up the question of imperfect acts of charity. These, we said, are meritorious, even though they do not immediately obtain the increase of charity they merit.

The next subject to be considered is the effect of venial sin upon charity. The question whether charity is directly and intrinsically impaired by venial sin, just as it is entirely destroyed by mortal sin, concerns habitual charity, the virtue itself, not its acts. These certainly can become less fervent.

St. Thomas[1] and other theologians explain that habitual charity is not lessened intrinsically and directly but only indirectly by venial sin; for, being a spiritual fire, charity by nature mounts upward as long as it keeps burning.

Venial sin cannot directly subtract from charity because venial sin is a disorder relative not to our last end, the object of charity, but only to the means to our end; it causes no direct loss, therefore, to the virtue by which we love God, our ultimate end, above all things. A sick man longs for health no less because he fails to keep faithfully to his diet. A scholar who makes an error in drawing deductions from an evident

[1] *Summa,* IIa IIae, q.24, a. 10.

principle experiences no lessening of certitude in regard to the principle itself.

If God punished venial sin by a decrease of charity, the punishment would in a sense be graver than the offense, since venial sin does not turn us away from our last end, but a decrease of charity would rob us of strength to reach it.

This is a consoling point of doctrine, since it follows that, if anyone has had great charity and then afterward allowed himself to become lukewarm without, however, falling into mortal sin, he does not go back to being a beginner again. He keeps his place as a proficient, even if his growth has stopped, and when he has done penance he should take up his spiritual life where he left off.[2]

In two ways the virtue of charity is, nevertheless, indirectly injured by venial sin. First, venial sin, at the time when committed, prevents the application of charity, which cannot order to God the matter of inordinate acts of this kind. Moreover, if a just man has a habitual affection for any venial sin, the fervor of his charity becomes habitually weakened; that is, the infused virtue, without suffering any direct loss in itself, loses its radiant liberty of action. Tie up a man's arms for some time, and they will not lose their strength but they will lose their liberty of action. Let the light of a lantern burn as brightly as ever; but if the glass enclosing it gets dirtier and dirtier, the lantern will give less and less light. A spring may give as much water as before, but when it becomes smothered with weeds, its clear jet is dissipated and muddied.

The evil inclinations engendered by repeated venial sins make the exercise of love for God more difficult, merit as

2 The same can be said of the man of great charity who falls into mortal sin but gets up again at once with such fervent contrition that he recovers the degree of charity he lost and the merits of his past life.

punishment the withholding of certain actual graces, and even serve to dispose a man for mortal sin. Love of pleasure, for example, although at first a venial sin, leads to grave falls.

Repeated sins of vanity, pride, jealousy, and sloth bind, as it were, die infused virtues and gifts of the Holy Ghost. Father Lallemant remarks[3] that it seems astonishing that so many religious who have lived in the state of grace for forty or fifty years, said Mass daily, and followed all the exercises of the religious life, and consequently have the gifts of the Holy Ghost to a physically high degree, should yet make so few acts of the gifts and reach no intimacy with God. We need not be surprised, he adds; venial sins committed in great number, eagerness for recognition and praise and for whatever else flatters self-love, little jealousies and sharp words, and love of ease, have all kept the infused virtues and the gifts in bondage, and barred die actual graces necessary to produce their acts.

The Dialogue of St. Catherine of Siena[4] gives us a good account of the way charity cools in many souls:

> Some there are who have become faithful servants, serving me with fidelity, without servile fear of punishment, but rather with love. This very love, however, if they serve me with a view to their own profit, or the delight and pleasure which they find in me, is imperfect. Dost thou know what proves the imperfect character of this love? The withdrawal of the consolations which they found in me, and the insufficiency and short duration of their love for their neighbour, which grows weak by degrees and oftimes disappears.
>
> Towards me their love grows weak when, on occasion, in order to exercise them in virtue and raise them above their imperfection,

[3] Cf. Lallemant, *Spiritual Doctrine,* ed. McDougall (Westminster, Md.: Newman Book Shop, 1946), IV Principle, chap. 3, art. 3.

[4] Chap. 60.

I withdraw from their minds my consolation and allow them to fall into battles and perplexities.® This I do so that, coming to perfect self-knowledge, they may know that of themselves they are nothing and have no grace, and, accordingly in time of battle fly to me as their benefactor, seeking me alone, with true humility, for which purpose I treat them thus, withdrawing from them consolation indeed, but not grace. At such a time these weak ones . . . sometimes abandon, under colour of virtue, many of their exercises, saying to themselves, *This labour does not profit me.* . . . This happens because their love was originally impure, for they gave to their neighbour the same imperfect love which they gave to me, that is to say, a love based only on desire for their own advantage. . . .

For those who desire eternal life, a pure love, prescinding from themselves, is necessary, for it is not enough for eternal life to fly sin from fear of punishment, or to embrace virtue from the motive of one's own advantage. Sin should be abandoned because it is displeasing to me, and virtue should be loved for my sake.

The bonds which the soul has made for itself must be cut away, for a single thread, as long as it remains unbroken, is enough to keep it from taking wing. Many such bonds hold us back without our clearly realizing it. To break them we must generously practice both exterior and interior mortification. We need, too, passive purification of the senses and the spirit so that, in the light of the gifts of understanding and knowledge, we may become conscious of the depth of our misery and the infinite greatness of God that we may be delivered from all our flaws and those defects in the inmost core of our faculties which hold back our upreaching faith, hope, and love.

5 Here we have an excellent explanation of the passive purifications, to be discussed later at greater length under the guidance of St. John of the Cross.

If the soul allows itself to be purified, the Holy Ghost will not fail to enlighten it more and more according to the degree of its habitual docility, by leading it on to a greater and greater generosity. St. John of the Cross tells us: "Hence the more the soul dispossesses the memory of forms and things which may be recalled by it, which are not God, the more will it set its memory upon God, and the emptier will its memory become, so that it may hope for Him who shall fill it." [6] St. Catherine of Siena[7] and all the great spiritual writers speak in the same way.

In heaven, faith gives way to vision, and hope to possession; but charity remains for all eternity. The blessed can never lose it, because the immediate vision of infinite Goodness will make mortal and venial sin absolutely impossible; nothing can anymore destroy charity, or lessen it in any way.

It is impossible for anyone seeing the divine essence, to wish not to see it. . . . The vision of the divine essence fills the soul with all good things, since it unites it to the source of all goodness; hence it is written (Ps. 16:15): "I shall be satisfied when Thy glory shall appear"; and (Wisd. 7:11): "All good things came to me together with her," i.e., with the contemplation of wisdom. In like manner neither has it any inconvenience attached to it: because it is written of the contemplation of wisdom (Wisd. 8:16): "Her conversation hath no bitterness, nor her company any tediousness." It is thus evident that the happy man cannot forsake happiness of his own accord [i.e., he cannot turn from God seen face to face, or ever love Him less]. Moreover, neither can he lose happiness, through God taking it away from him. Because, since the withdrawal of happiness is a punishment, it cannot be inflicted by God, the just Judge, except for some fault; and he that sees God cannot fall into a fault,

6 *Ascent of Mount Carmel,* Bk. III, chap. 15.
7 *Dialogue,* chaps. 100 f.

since the rectitude of the will, of necessity, results from that vision.[8]

The summit of the life of charity is a love of divine friendship without end. To give us an idea of its duration, it is not enough to say that it will last for always, or to multiply millions of years by millions more; its span lies far beyond every multiplication of hours, or years, or centuries, beyond all time, however long we may imagine it, even above angelic time, measured by the succession of angelic thought. Charity, like tire beatific vision, must be measured by eternity itself, the measure of the being of God, of His ever immutable drought and uncreated love. Even if time had no beginning and no end, it would not be at all like eternity, for time is always flying, and past, present, and future follow one after the other. Eternity is absolutely immutable, without any succession; it is a *nunc stans,* a changeless now and not a *nunc fluens,* a changing now, a present following on no past, preceding no future, an unmoving not a fugitive moment, an endless dawn encompassing perfectly and all at once the interminable life of God, without beginning or end. We are told that musical geniuses hear the melodies they compose all at once, just as great philosophers have a synthesis of their subject that is like a single glance. These serve as dim analogies of the immediate vision of God and the love flowing from it; both will be in the most exact sense of the term life eternal, measured as God's own.[9] So great a goal is worth much suffering, demands deep purification, and has as its normal prelude in this world charity and contemplation.

8 Cf. Ia IIae, q.5, a.4.
9 Ia, q. 10, a.5, ad lum.

CHAPTER XV

Normal Spiritual Progress and Daily Communion

As has already been so often said, traditional doctrine as explained by St. Thomas tells us that normal spiritual progress should not only continue but should become greater and greater as the soul draws nearer to God and is more attracted by Him, just as falling bodies fall faster and faster as they near the earth and are more drawn to it. The just man, then, in his journey to eternity, ought to push on by steps of love, *gressibus amoris,* as St. Gregory said, going ahead more and more generously as he approaches God. Normally those in the unitive way make more rapid progress than beginners, those in the purgative way. In their last years, the saints, despite the weight of age, go forward more swiftly along the upward way to God than they did at first, although then the attraction of newness helped to carry them along. We have a striking example of this truth in St. Thomas' last years, for he became so occupied with contemplating God that he could no longer continue dictating the *Summa theologica* and left it unfinished.

St. Thomas knew that, unlike violent movements, that is, movements contrary to the natural tendency of the mover, all natural movement, like that of falling bodies, is more rapid when approaching the term or end naturally fitting for it.[1] He adds, as we have seen, that the same is true in the

[1] Cf. St. Thomas, *Comm, in lib. I De coelo,* lect. 17; *Summa,* la Ilae, q.36, a.6. Cf. *supra,* chap. 2, art. 4.

order of grace: *"Qui sunt in gratia, quanto plus accedunt ad finem, plus debent crescere!"*[2] Those in the state of grace ought to grow spiritually in proportion to their nearness to their last end, according to the words of St. Paul to the Hebrew, "comforting one another, and so much the more as you see the day approaching."[3]

The progress of souls attracted by God ought to follow the same law of accelerating motion in the spiritual realm as a movement of bodies drawn by the force of gravity in the material universe. St. Augustine's words express this thought: "Wherever I go, love is the weight that draws me."[4]

But, as a matter of fact, spiritual growth often resembles the slowing motion of a stone thrown into die air: its speed falls off until the stone comes to a standstill and then begins to fall earthward. Granted that this frequently happens to souls, we need not for that reason look upon it as normal, since it is an abnormality resulting from negligence and sin, which weigh the soul down and finally smother the fiery upthrust of grace.

If we consider the nature of charity, we realize that it is

2 St. Thomas, *in Ep. ad Hebraeos,* io: 25.

2 Hcb. 10: 25.

4 In his *Confessions,* XIII, 9, St. Augustine develops this analogy: "The body by its own weight tends toward its own place. Weight tends not only downward, but toward its own place. Fire tends upward, a stone downward. They are urged by their own weight, they seek their own places. Oil poured below water, is raised above the water; water poured upon oil, sinks below the oil. They are urged by their own weights to seek their own places. When out of their order, they are restless; restored to order, they are at rest. My weight, is my love; thereby am I borne, whithersoever I am borne. We are inflamed, by Thy gift we are kindled; and are carried upwards; we glow inwardly, and go forwards. We ascend Thy ways that be in our heart, and sing a song of degrees; we glow inwardly with Thy fire, with Thy good fire, and we go; because we go upwards to tile peace of Jerusalem; for gladdened was I in those who said unto me, We will go up to the house of the Lord. There hath Thy good pleasure placed us, that we may desire nothing else, but to abide there for ever."

an infused virtue tending to unite us more and more completely to God, to respond ever more perfectly to the first commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart and with thy whole soul and with all thy strength and with all dry mind: and thy neighbor as thyself." 5 The more our love of God grows, the greater becomes our supernatural capacity for loving Him; love empties itself more and more, as it were, that it may be filled with the fullness of the sovereign Good.®

Effects of fervent daily Communion

This doctrine about grace finds strong confirmation in the Church's teaching concerning the effects of daily Communion. When we receive daily with the necessary dispositions and a right and pious intention, in a spirit of faith and with the desire to overcome our inordinate inclinations and to advance in God's love, it produces in us *ex opere operato* an increase of charity proportionate to the degree of our fervor. Today's Communion disposes us to receive tomorrow's^ more worthily by increasing our charity and preparing us to communicate, if not with more sengible^erypr, for that is accidental, at least with greater readiness of will for God's service, a livelier substantial devotion, even in spite of any aridity. In principle, or normally, then, if we remain generous, each of our Communions ought to be not only as fervent as the one preceding, but even more so and to produce in us an increase of charity proportionate to our growing fervor. We should make steadily increasing progress in loving God. If we put no obstacle in the way and especially if we receive

0 Luke 10: 27.
• Cf. IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 7.

Communion every day with better dispositions, our love of God becomes a stronger and stronger spiritual attraction drawing us more and more powerfully to the Sovereign Good.

All this was verified in die life of the Blessed Virgin, for no venial sin, no imperfection, choked up the wellspring of her charity. The initial fullness of grace she received at the moment of her immaculate conception surpassed the graces of all the saints and angels together. She is the one perfect diamond among God's innumerable precious stones. And each succeeding and growing act of charity increased her initial spiritual treasure in a way too marvelous for our understanding.[1]

Mary_'s supernatural love grew particularly when she received Holy Communion from St. John. She had within her no result of original sin, no imperfection to abate the ardo£ .of her charity. The principal condition for a fervent Com-_ mun^Qoj§Jiunger^O£_the Eucharist Even the greatest saints r have never ex'penencea*the~same^spiritualTiunger as the ~Îîessed Mother knew for her Eucharistic Lord. Yet St. Catherine of Siena desired theEucharist so ardently that one day when she had been refused Communion a piece of thélarge Tiost jwhich the celebrant held in his hands detached itself and came to her miraculously. The jgmg miracle took, place, too, in the first Communion of Blessed Imelda, who died of Jove_dprin<T jier thanksgiving.

Think, then, of the attractive force drawing Mary's soul to Christ really present in the Eucharist. With a heart at once virginal and motherly she loved Him not only as a beloved but as a really adorable Son. Entirely forgetting herself, she relived during the Mass celebrated by St. John the sacrifice

[1] Cf. Hugon, O.P., *Marie, mère de la divine grâce,* pp. 112-24.

of the cross. Better than anyone else she understood in what a profound sense these two sacrifices make but one, the same Victim being offered and the same Priest offering, *"idem nunc offerens, ministerio sacerdotum,"* as the Council of Trent says. As she had on Calvary, Mary united herself daily more closely with Christ's sacrifice perpetuated on the altar and she shared in it by an increasingly fervent Communion.

On His side, Christ had the greatest desire for Mary's definitive sanctification. He asks only to communicate to us the treasure of grace overflowing from His heart. On earth He suffered much on finding obstacles to His divine generosity. In Mary no obstacle ever existed. Her communion with Christ in the Eucharist was the closest possible fusion of their two spiritual lives. He the Redeemer, she the coredemptrix, herself ransomed by an act of perfect preservative redemption, the highest of all Christ's works. When she received Communion, Mary became again the living tabernacle of our Savior's sacred body, a pure tabernacle a thousand times more precious than any golden ciborium, or tower of ivory, ark of die covenant, *vas insigne devotionis.*

What St. Teresa says of transforming union in theacventl? castlj gives us a little insight into the effects of Mary's Communion. St. Teresa tells us that this spiritual union is as close as light to the crystal it passes through, as fire to the glowing iron which has taken on its properties. The rays of supernatural light and heat coming from Christ's soul and divinity more and more enlightened the intellect and strengthened the will of His virgin Mother. These spiritual goods, her infused wisdom and shining goodness, the humble Virgin could in no way refer to herself; she never ceased giving glory to God for them. In her was fully realized our Lord's words as re-

corded by St. John: "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father; so he that eateth Me, the same also shall live by Me."[8]

During her life on earth, Mary our Mediatrix was, especially at the time of Holy Communion, a pure mirror reflecting back to Christ the supernatural rays received from Him while at the same time in some way condensing them to diffuse them into our souls.

In the case of the saints, venial sins of weakness, impossible to avoid entirely, retard their progress in God's love; however, their growth in humility because of such slight offenses in some way compensates for them, and that is why God permits these negligences in His elect. At any rate, the saints go forward ever more quickly to God as they get older, despite the burden of age. The priest of eighty can, say with evernew, fervor when begiqping Mass: *"Introibo ad altare Dei, Deum qui laetificat \uventutem meam"* The Fncharist can jdways reallv renew the spiritual youth of the priestly soul and of any interior soul. The tree of life in the garden of Paradise could never have kept us young in so marvelous a way.

Holy Communion and arrested progress

Nevertheless, even among daily communicants, we find arrested souls, no longer making enough progress and consequently not to be called either beginners or proficients or perfect; for a dwarf is neither a perfect child, adolescent, nor adult.

Retarded souls manifest an analogous deviation from the spiritual norm. They are in the state of grace, and when they communicate their Communions are not entirely ineffectual,

8 John 6: 58.

really producing in them a slight increase of charity. But a contrary growth of deliberate venial sins covers over this minimum increase, and progress may become slower and slower, like a stone thrown into the air.

Certainly St. Thomas[9] and many other theologians agree in saying that venial sins do not directly subtract from charity considered in itself; for, being an infused virtue, it cannot be developed directly like the acquired virtues by the repetition of virtuous acts and consequently cannot be intrinsically impaired by their cessation. Further, venial sin, being a disorder relative not to our last end but to the means to our end, cannot be punished by a direct lessening of charity, since charity concerns our ultimate end, God to be loved above all things. Mortal sin can indeed destroy charity as the two are incompatible, and mortal sin turns us away from our last end. Venial sin, however, cannot impair charity in itself. Anyone who had ten talents of charity two years ago and has not sinned mortally since, still has ten talents of charity today in spite of venial sins committed during that time.

Although this is true, as we have seen,[10] venial sins indirectly work harm to charity and even dispose the soul for mortal sin. They diminish the fervor of charity extrinsically by keeping it from applying itself to some object, by preventing it from radiating; they hedge it in with obstacles and rob it of liberty of action, developing inordinate inclinations that hamper the exercise of love of God and neighbor. Thus charity gives less light though it burns as before; it goes in bondage though no less strong.

It follows that if a soul has a habitual and growing attach-

8 IIa IIae, q. 24, a. 10.

10 Ibid., and above, in the preceding chapter.

ment to venial sin, the sacramental increase of charity is not wholly lost but it grows less each day. Please God it may not come to a complete halt. If it did, then Holy Communion would indeed produce no effect whatever; it would no longer be a good Communion; the attachment to venial sin would have at last disposed the soul for mortal sin, directly or indirectly willed.[11] The old adage, "Not to go forward is to go back," would then be completely verified. No longer to grow at all by daily Communion is to fall back as far as mortal sin, a bad state to be in.[12]

Probably many who seem to make no progress in spite of frequent Communion actually receive at least the grace to avoid mortal sin, for which repeated venial sin disposes them. If they did not receive Communion, they would fall into grave sin; the fact that they do not, that they resist temptation, shows that they are still making progress and meriting. Therefore, if they avoid mortal sin or at least, after having sinned, do not make a bad confession, their Communions received with the good intention to resist temptation produce at least some feeble growth of charity though it may be hidden by venial sins and their effects. Too often our increase of charity

11 To obtain absolution for all our serious sins, whether directly or indirectly voluntary, let us, accusing ourselves of those we remember, have a sincere sorrow proportionate to our culpability before God for those we cannot recall. Sins indirectly voluntary are generally transgressions of omission, for example, missing Mass on Sunday because we stayed up too late the night before, knowing that the probable result would be our oversleeping the next morning. Cf. la Ilae, q.6, a.3; a.7, ad 3um.

12 Cf. Schram, O.S.B., *Institutiones theologiae mysticae.* II, 125. His words may sound severe to some. However, it must be remembered that indirectly voluntary sins, the results of our negligence, must be taken into account. We are responsible not only for the evil we do but for tire omission of good we should have done. On indirect voluntariness, cf. St Thomas, *Summa,* la Ilae, q.6, a.3; q.7, ad 3um; q.77, a.7; Ila Ilae, q.46, a.2, ad sum; q.64, a.8; q.79, a.3, ad 3um; *De malo,* q.3, a.8.

is slight because, owing to lack of fervor, we do not approach often enough the fire of grace, the Eucharist. And sometimes tire growth of charity is not only feeble but continually more feeble, a disorder consequent on persistent and progressive attachment to venial sin. Notwithstanding, normally every Communion ought to be more fervent and more fruitful than the preceding, not in accidental, sensible devotion, but in the substantial devotion of the will.

This doctrine leads good people to ask themselves whether throughout years of daily Communion they are advancing more quickly or more slowly. In our spiritual life there lies a mystery known only to God and judged in many different ways by men. Often saints, the Curé of Ars for example, think they are slipping back, whereas in reality, by receiving Communion frequently and meriting, they are not only journeying to God at a faster and faster pace but also growing in insight into their own misery. On the other hand, many who are making no progress at all have a false sense of security springing from nothing less than carelessness and neglect of sanctification or even, it may be, of salvation.

In reacting against the Jansenistic proscription of frequent Communion, we must not fall into the other extreme as expressed in the laxist proposition that fréquentation of confession and Communion, even by those who live like pagans, is a sign of predestination.[13] This proposition was condemned by Innocent XI.

Conditions for fervent Communion

For Holy Communion to produce its effects in us, we must receive it with the right intentions. For fervent Communion,

13 Denzinger, no. 1206.

we must have a living faith and that ardent desire called hunger for the Eucharist. There is no question here of any desire of the sensible order, like certain consolations sometimes accorded to us by our Lord, but of spiritual aspiration, founded on the absolute certitude of supernatural faith in the Eucharist as the good and refreshment for our spiritual forces, fire for our heart, light for our intellect, strength for our will, peace for our passions.

If we wonder how it can happen that we do not experience any spiritual hunger for the Eucharist, we ought to remember that doctors advise people who have lost their appetite to take exercise. The same can be said in regard to our spiritual life. We lack exercise. At least one act of mortification a day is a necessity for us; and little by little we should develop a spirit of sacrifice. It will give us peace and joy by putting to death our egoism, self-love, and pride, and by making room in our souls for love of God and neighbor until they take first place there. Then, by daily sacrifice and through the growth of supernatural love, we shall indeed hunger for the Eucharist.

Before approaching the holy table, we do well to remember how Mary received Communion and to ask her to obtain grace for us that our hearts may be so purified that when our Lord comes to us He will find no obstacle to His grace, but only an ardent desire to receive Him. Then we shall allay His burning thirst for our salvation and sanctification. Then in Communion and thanksgiving, we shall truly find the Eucharistic heart of Christ and grow in appreciation of that supreme act of love by which it is given to us in the holy sacrament. We shall see more clearly how the Eucharistic heart is indeed a heart that loves us, that waits for us patiently,

hears us eagerly, burns with new graces to give us and longs to speak to listening hearts.

Blessed Grignon de Montfort[14] advises us at Communion time to ask Mary to share with us her own sentiments in receiving; to obtain for us a loving faith in the mystery of redemption, and in the infinite value of the sacrifice of the cross perpetuated on our altars; to give us a deeper understanding of how Holy Communion ought to be daily a more intimate participation in that sacrifice, that is, in the sentiments our Lord Himself had when He offered Himself for us on Calvary and in those ever living in His heart as He continues to offer Himself through the ministry of His priests.

If we always had these dispositions, every Communion would be more fervent than the one before, and our journey to God would, by the same token, be made at greater and greater speed, like the saints'. This would be nothing extraordinary, but merely the normal life of generosity, even as in the life of grace the normal thing is never to sin mortally after baptism. Frequent mortal sin in die baptized is an absolute disorder killing what was meant to last forever and flower forth in glory—the life of grace. Not only should sanctifying grace never be destroyed after baptism, but it ought to go on developing until deadi in proportion to our nearness to God and His growing attractive force on our souls. In following this normal way generously, souls ordinarily arrive at loving contemplation of the mysteries of faith, and particularly that mystery daily renewed for us, die Mass. Certainly this is the meaning of the quotation from St. Thomas cited at the beginning of the chapter: *"Qui sunt in gratia, quanto plus ac-*

14 *True Devotion to Mary,* tr. Faber, cbap. 8.

cedunt ad finem, plus debent crescere." Those who are in the state of grace ought to grow spiritually all the more as they near the end of their journey to eternity.

Charity and the gift of wisdom

That the virtues and the seven gifts grow together with charity, is especially true of the gift of wisdom, the highest gift of all, with a particular affinity for the great virtues.[16] Therefore the apostle St. James teaches us to ask for the light of wisdom: "But if any of you want wisdom, let him ask of God . . . and it shall be given him."[16] Blessed Grignon de Montfort[17] tells us that we must ask for it with a firm and lively faith[18] and without hesitation; whoever wavers in his faith cannot hope to obtain it.[19] And we must ask for it with pure faith, without grounding our prayer on sensible consolations, visions, or personal revelations. Although all these may be genuine and good, as they were in the lives of some of the saints, it is always dangerous to depend on them, and faith may become less pure and meritorious in the degree in which it is based on extraordinary and sensible graces of this kind. In what the Holy Ghost makes known of the wonders and beauties of wisdom, of our need for it and God's desire to give it to us, we find powerful motives for desiring and asking wisdom of God in all faith and eagerness.

The just man, the wise man, lives by faith without seeing, without feeling, although he may be attacked by doubts and darkness of mind, of illusions in the imagination, of disgust and boredom of

15 Ia IIae, q.66, a.2; q.68, a.5; IIa Hae, q-45, a.4, 5.
16 Jas. 1: 5 f.
17 *Amour de la divine sagesse.* Part II, chap. 6.
18 Jas. 1:6.
19 *Ibid.,* 1:7.

heart, and sadness and anguish of soul. The wise do not ask to see the extraordinary things saints have seen, nor to taste sweetness in their prayers and devotions; they ask with faith for divine wisdom, and it ought to be held as more certain that it will be given to them (Jas. i : 5) than if an angel had come down from heaven to assure them of it, because Wisdom Himself has said: "For every one that asketh, receiveth" (Luke 11:10). "If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father from heaven give the good Spirit to them that ask Him?" (Luke it : 13.)

We must, moreover, ask for wisdom with perseverance, for if I we are to acquire this precious pearl and have this infinite treasure, we must use a holy importunity with God, or we shall never receive it. Whoever would obtain wisdom, must ask for it day and night, without growing weary or disheartened. Happy will he be if he obtains it after ten, twenty, or thirty years of prayer, and even an hour before death. . . .

The Holy Ghost Himself has composed a prayer to express our plea for wisdom: "God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things with thy word, . . . give me wisdom, that sitteth by thy throne, and cast me not off from among thy children. . . . Send her out of thy holy heaven, and from the throne of thy majesty, that she may be with me and may labour with me, that I may know what is acceptable with thee. . . . For by wisdom they were healed, whosoever have pleased thee, O Lord, from the beginning" (Wisd., chap. 9).